

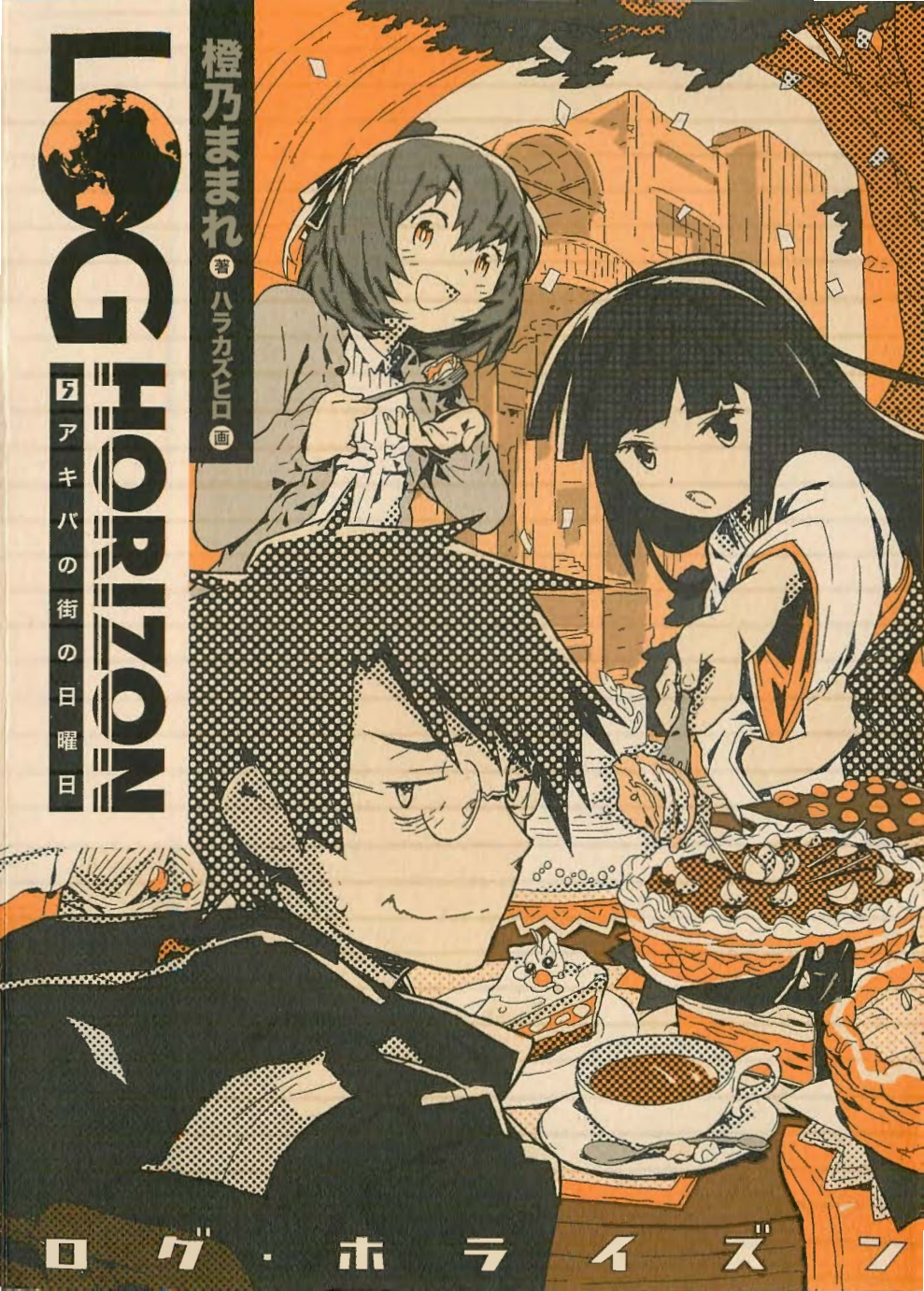
LOG

HORIZON

アキバの街の日曜日

橙乃ままれ

著 ハラカズヒロ 画



ログ・ホライズン





ログ・ホライズン
〈記録の地平線〉

本拠地のひみつ

illustration: 橋本モチチ



1F

① Bath room

Bathing room for the Log Horizon guild members. Available time for male and female are separated. Currently, the guild is saving up to purchase a Japanese style cypress bath.

② Restroom

The building used to be for commerce, so there is a dedicated restroom on each floor. No need to wait for others. Toilet cleaning is a fitting assignment for punishing a member.

③ Shiroe's room

The guild forced Shiroe to use the largest room because he is the guild master. However, the

room is also his office, so papers and books has taken over the room completely

④ Nyanta's room

The sunniest room in the building. Serara frequents the room to clean, but it's always clean anyways, so she ends up just sunbathing.

⑤ Minori's room

Simple room, with only the bare necessities. Minori has been planning with Isuzu to get more furnitures for the room. For now, she's starting with changing the wallpaper.

⑥ Touya's room

Touya's spoils of battle fills the room. It's maintained pretty clean for a boy's room, because Minori checks up on it.

⑦ Kitchen

Nyanta's castle. The life-line of Log Horizon. The spice collection he bought at the market is exquisite lineup for a guild this size.

⑧ Dining room

When there's anyone here, everyone gradually gathers in this room. This is also where they host guests, and Minori is in charge of keeping the place clean.

⑨ Wooden Deck

The sun shines through the leaves, and nice breeze keeps this place comfortable. When it's sunny outside, you can find Naotsugu taking a nap here. Sometimes used when drinking booze.

⑩ Naotsugu's room

Not very stylish, Naotsugu keeps it simple. Valuable gears and loot are lined up. There does not appear to be a pantsu collection, however.

⑪ Akatsuki's room

Traditional Japanese style room with tatami mattress and hibachi. Akatsuki prefers futon mattress to sleep on rather than beds. The room is simple, with incense burning for scent.

⑫ Isuzu's room

Because she keeps buying music instruments, the room hardly has any furnitures other than a bed and a desk. She plays her music on the wooden deck or the roof top.

⑬ Rudie's room

Otherwise known as RundelHouse. Or dog house.

Named by Isuzu. "Adventurer"-esque items bought at the market fills the room. The bookshelf for spell books needs some work, however.

4.5.6F

⑭ Laundry room

Adventurer's gear don't get dirty, but clothes crafted by hands do. Doing laundry is a necessary part of daily chores, so on any given sunny day the place is filled with laundry.

R

⑮ Water Tank

The tank was at first very leaky, but the crafters of Roderick Firm repaired and installed a fully running water system. The tank is filled by water elementals summoned by visiting summoners.

LOG HORIZON

Fragrant green winds blow across this new, yet somehow old land. The imaginary world of Theldesia is home to dragons and giants, monsters and demihumans. With a burden weighing upon your soul, go forth, O winged one <Adventurer>! This land spreads out before you like a blank page; make your mark in it!

ロ グ ・ ホ ラ イ ズ ン



アキバの街の日曜日

橙乃ままれ

006



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腹ぐるろ眼鏡



シロエ

伝説のブレイ集団〈放蕩者の茶会〉で参謀役を務めていた思索派の〈付与術師〉。精神的引きこもりで人との関わりを避けていたが、〈大災害〉を経て、自身のギルド〈記録の地平線〉を設立。

美少女暗殺者



アカツキ

以前は性別を隠し、寡黙な男性としてブレイしていたが、〈大災害〉後は、現実世界と同じ姿を取り戻す。助けてくれたシロエを主君と呼んで慕っている。〈記録の地平線〉所属。

中学生巫女



ミノリ

マジメで責任感の強い性格で、活発で無茶をしがちな弟トウヤの世話をやく。〈記録の地平線〉に所属し、恩師たるシロエの背中を見つめ、学び追いつこうと努力の日々。

カリスマ狂戦士



クラスティ

アキバ最大の戦闘系ギルド〈D.D.D〉を率いる。落ち着いた知的な風貌だが、戦闘となれば悪鬼のごとき素顔をあらわにすると評判。対外的には〈円卓会議〉の議長も務める。

ぐうたら姫



レイネシア

マイハマの街を治める〈大地人〉貴族の姫君。優雅な美少女の見た目とは裏腹に、その実はお風呂さえ厭う天性の面倒くさがり。侍女のエリッサにその不精を叱られることもたびたび。

敏腕会計士



ヘンリエッタ

〈三日月同盟〉所属で、同ギルドのギルドマスター・マリエールとは、女子高時代からの親友。かわいい女の子に目がなく、特にアカツキをおもちゃにして楽しんでいる。

海岸沿いのモンスター大量発生は、サーバー全体と思われる異常事態に発展。危険の迫ったチヨウシの町を救うべく、新人チームのトウヤらが立ち上がる。一方、危機を前にしてなお、決着がつかない大地人同盟と〈冒険者〉の会議に、終止符をうったのは、〈大地人〉のぐうたら姫、レイネシア。

自らアキバの街に赴き、貴族の誇りをすて〈冒険者〉に助けを求めた。この演説が多く、〈冒険者〉の心を動かし、戦いに導くきっかけとなる。

そんなとき、シロエに「ルンデルハウスが戦闘で倒れた」とSOSが届く。彼は復活が不可能な〈大地人〉だったのだ。ルンデルハウスの死を受け入れざるを得ない状況の中、シロエが行使したとある「魔法」で、彼は〈冒険者〉として新たな生をうけることに。



今回の大規模戦闘で〈冒険者〉と〈大地人〉の関係は大きく変わり、互いに共存の道を探ることとなった。

CHAPTER.



EVERYDAY LIFE OF SHIROE

[シロエの日常]

▶ NAME: CHARASIN

▶ LEVEL: 90

▶ RACE: HUMAN

▶ CLASS: SUMMONER

▶ HP: 7698

▶ MP: 11866

▶ ITEM 1:

[GREAT 8-PRONGED RAKE]

A LONG POLEARM WITH IT'S TIP SPIT INTO 8. A RARE ARTIFACT-CLASS WEAPON THAT INCREASES GOLD DROP FROM MONSTERS. IT USUALLY ACTS AS DECORATION IN THE GUILD HALL.



▶ ITEM 2:

[LUCKY DRAGON HAT]

PRODUCTION-CLASS ARMOR CRAFTED BY TAILORS USING "CREST OF HAPPINESS" WHICH IS A RARE DROP FROM <LUCKY DRAGONS>. INCREASES WEARERS MOVEMENT SPEED AND EVASION RATE.



▶ ITEM 3:

[MARYONA'S SADDLE BAGS]

MAGICAL SADDLE WHICH WAS A REWARD FOR A LEVEL 80 QUEST "MARYONA'S JET BLACK HORSE". IT HAS A LARGER CAPACITY THAN A "MAGICAL BAG OF HOLDING" BUT IT REDUCES MOVEMENT SPEED WHEN IN USE, SO IT IS USUALLY MOUNTED ON A HORSE.





＜塩＞

最重要調味料。天然ミネラル配合。

Part 1

God created the world in 6 days and on the 7th day he rested. This meant that even God needed a vacation. Shiroe thought humans should follow God in this respect.

Taking a break after work.

Otherwise humans would have problems.

This was common sense.

There was no need to break away from this truth just because they were Adventurers, or because of the Catastrophe.

Shiroe was sulking because he had been too busy lately.

It was not that his guildmates in Log Horizon were bullying him. In fact, Nyanta, Naotsugu, Akatsuki, and even the new members Minori, Tohya, Isuzu, and Rundelhaus all wanted to help Shiroe. But the amount of work from the Round Table Council was just too much.

(No, this way of thinking is despicable.)

These tasks were not the result of insidious harassment or abuse of authority.

Probably.

But the answer lies within Shiroe himself.

Shiroe was seen by the Round Table Council as the 'battle tactician with incredible foresight', and he admitted that it was a proper description. But even if Shiroe acknowledged this, it was not as if he had a genius-level intellect or extraordinary talents. Shiroe gauged that he was only average in terms of abilities.

Shiroe saw himself as a typical preparation-type. He thought his talent lay in collecting information before events, analyzing and making observations, and then writing a proper scenario by taking into account any changes during its execution.

These types were not rare. Roughly all players who checked a game's walkthrough before starting belonged to this type. This was just a timid way of doing things, but Shiroe had a unique characteristic. He was not content with reading a game walkthrough—he had to write one himself. This characteristic should be driven more by curiosity than timidity.

Because he's not confident, he would put in effort to prepare. If someone requested something from him, he would make further preparations. Shiroe was the type who got chosen for important positions unwittingly, even though he didn't like helping others.

Timidity was often seen as a weakness, but that was not the case for Shiroe. When he played a battle tactician, being cautious to the extreme was not a weakness, but a strength.

Although, that only held true when they had enough manpower. Right now, Shiroe, who was struggling alone, was unable to breathe due to the pressure of his workload.

This alternate world was an over-sized research subject for Shiroe.

It was better to have more information, and the range of information he wanted to gather was very wide. The amount of walkthrough information the world of Elder Tales had accumulated over twenty years was enormous. And there was ten times more after changing into this alternate world. Moreover, this was not a stationary world, but it was a world that evolved every second as things interacted with each other.

Shiroe tried to prioritize and investigate the necessary data. He lacked manpower and finances, but he could garner public information through the Round Table Council. He even had a set budget. His efficiency in gathering intelligence was much better now than right after the Catastrophe.

Even so, the data he wanted or needed was too colossal, he was unable to shake off his feeling of unease.

Shiroe did not start collating data of this world purely out of his own curiosity. Whether to go back to the original world or to give up, he would still need to live on in this world first. This was the consensus of all the Adventurers in Akiba.

Information could be a lifeline in many situations.

Just as one would need a map to navigate the oceans, the Round Table Council needed information about this world. If you were not clear with what was happening, you wouldn't be able to make the correct decision.

Hence, Shiroe considered gathering and analyzing data to be official business.

As one of the 11 guildmasters in the Round Table Council, he needed to spend a lot of time just doing daily communications and tasks. Reviewing documents also took a lot of time. If it were a major guild like D.D.D or Oceanic Systems, there would be a lot of talented personnel to assist and support the guildmaster.

In a sense, this was the same as having a team of secretaries supporting Michitaka or Krusty in their administrative duties. Even if it were not at the level of secretary, having reliable companions to help you review and give feedback would be invaluable.

But Log Horizon had only eight members, including the two new members, so Shiroe didn't expect to have someone around at all times to assist him in his administrative duties. The most proficient person at administrative matters apart from Shiroe was Minori, but Minori was still in training. If she helped Shiroe, her level gap with Tohya, Isuzu, and Rundelhaus would get wider, so he couldn't ask for her help too often.

So the end result was Shiroe being crushed by mountains of administrative forms and documents.

"Woo wah, there is no way I can finish this!"



Shiroe sighed at the paper peaks. It might be in his nature to bear responsibility for everything, but that didn't mean he doesn't get discouraged. Staying indoors all this time had made him depressed.

Shiroe looked out the window.

This window was just a square opening in the wall a few days ago, but window frames and canvas curtains had now been installed.

The time was noon, and it was raining outside.

The autumn rain that descended on the city was as fine as silver threads. Falling on every leaf of the ancient trees of Akiba, it was directly wetting the ground and making a peaceful sound.

This scene was serene, gentle and beautiful.

When Elder Tales was just a game, the weather in different zones would change randomly according to the game mechanics. It was very pretty compared to other games, but juxtaposed to the shiny silver threads now falling in Akiba, it was merely pretty in gaming standards.

Shiroe felt the scenes in this world were better than old Japan's in all aspects.

Although they were all rain, they each had their own style, such as the lightning rains in the summer afternoons, or the mist-like rain in autumn.

Living in Japan, with its developed transportation system where all delivery services could show off their speeds, Shiroe could only see such seasonal scenery from the NHK. So to him, just the weather alone was like an epic drama series that had finished airing.

He opened the canvas curtain and saw the city that seemed to be covered with white lines that went unbroken all the way from the ground to the sky. It was October, so it was not too cold yet but the chill would slowly start to set in. He could see people all over the city ignoring the rain and Adventurers who were using this chance to clean their buildings.

It had been two months since the War of Sand Leaf, but the mopping up campaign was progressing slowly.

No, the clean up stage had already passed. They should now consider how to reinforce their relationship with the League of Freedom Towns Eastal, an organization made up of the People of the Land. This had been confirmed in reports Shiroe received. According to the intelligence, the number of minor skirmishes had decreased and issues related to resource transportation and trade were gradually increasing. At this stage, it should fall under the jurisdiction of the merchant guilds.

The grand preparations for the Libra Festival was the evidence.

Shiroe finally felt the burden on his shoulders when he thought about this.

... But that was only one of his burdens.

What worried Shiroe now was the news from other regions. He did not have energy to spare just dealing with Akiba, so he had been ignoring them deliberately for a while, but they were reaching a stage where he couldn't ignore them any longer. The data from his sources was collated and countermeasures executed. But after gathering further information, he realized that there had been major changes. No, it could be said that the changes were too extreme.

(I thought this might happen, but it just had to turn out this way, the other areas are really...)

Shiroe relaxed and leaned against his wicker chair while gazing at the ceiling.

Maps, figures and reports flashed through his mind.

The Japan that had been recreated at half of its original size using the Half-Gaia project... This place known as the Crescent Archipelago, Yamato, contained five player cities. Akiba, which Shiroe and the others resided in, Shibuya, Minami, Susukino, and Nakasu were known as the 5 major cities and were the base cities for players in Elder Tales.

When Elder Tales was still an MMO game, these cities were connected by devices called the intercity transport gates that allowed instantaneous travel between the cities. This made it feel like the cities were close to one another, but as the gates weren't currently operational, the time needed to travel between cities had increased. In this world where monsters roamed free, traveling had become risky, resulting in a decline in the interactions between cities.

It had been 5 months since the Catastrophe.

Akiba, where Shiroe and the others resided, had undergone major changes. It looked the same from the outside, but the Adventurers' way of life, and relationships with others, had both undergone a decisive makeover. With their interactions with the People of the Land as well as the League of Freedom Towns Eastal, there should be no one left who thought that this was just a game.

Everyone in this world have had the equal chance of experiencing these 5 months of time, so Shiroe thought that the other places would have changed just like Akiba did.

But the change in Akiba was influenced by Shiroe. Shiroe was aware of the efforts needed to change this city. If that were the case, other cities could have also been influenced by the will of 'someone' as well, right? Shiroe felt his heart getting heavy as he thought about this 'will'.

Shibuya changed the least.

Shibuya held a special place among the 5 player cities.

To put it simply, Shibuya was the newest city to be set up. It was added to disperse the massive number of players in Akiba. Shibuya, which was made with this purpose in mind, was dependent on the intercity transport gate. With the gate not functioning, the city was all but paralyzed.

Hence, almost all Adventurers based in Shibuya had moved to Akiba. Shibuya was used by very few players, akin to the villas of Akiba in the neighboring rural areas.

Susukino was evolving just as Shiroe expected. The city's security had been deteriorating since the Catastrophe, to the point of no return. It had become a lawless city because of this. The Adventurers who wanted to leave had mostly succeeded in these past few months.

Serara was a beginner Adventurer, but she still managed to hide her tracks and escape successfully. This was thanks to Shiroe's rescue operation. Shortly after, the Round Table Council sent out several expedition teams over a period of time to evacuate all those who wished to leave Susukino.

Susukino, which seemed set to fail as a player city, still had more than 200 Adventurers left. They were not left behind by the expedition teams, but instead chose to stay in the dangerous environment of Susukino by their own will. Not only this, Akiba and Minami also had a few Adventurers who willingly migrated to Susukino.

In the Elder Tales world that had changed into reality, there seemed to be some demand for 'lawlessness'. Susukino had evolved into a city where the minority Adventurers ruled over the majority People of the Land...

Shiroe did not sense any evil from this. No, to not feel any evil at all was wrong, it was just not obvious. Shiroe sensed fear.

Shiroe championed the rights of the People of the Land at the Round Table Council for two reasons.

First, it was a problem of survival. The number of People of the Land was ten times that of the Adventurers. Almost all consumables ingredients, the resources of this world, were made by the People of the Land. If they governed the People of the Land with an iron fist, friction and conflict would arise with the People of the Land. Whether they won or lost, they would have to bear a heavy price. Protecting the rights of the People of the Land was a way of protecting their own rights. It was not based on the ideals of human rights, but was built on the idea of benefits versus losses.

The second reason was fear.

Shiroe still remembered clearly the People of the Land at the village he visited on his way back from Susukino. Shiroe had felt for the first time that the People of the Land were humans in that village. He could feel their warmth, history, personality and intentions, and saw them as 'humans' for the first time.

To enslave an intelligent human was terrifying for Shiroe, who received a standard Japanese education. This was too much of a taboo, overlooking the reasons for justice——evil and morality——and linked directly to the emotion of fear. He feared becoming a slave himself, but the thought of owning slaves and ordering them around was just repulsive.

The chill Shiroe felt from Susukino was cut of the same cloth.

But there were only a couple hundred Adventurers in Susukino, such small scale activities could still be salvaged.

(But the problem lies over there instead...)

Minami's situation was...

Far beyond Shiroe's expectation and developing at an incredible speed.

Part 2

"Shi...roe...sama!"

Shiroe who was lost in thought heard a moving voice that seemed reproachful with a hint of gratitude.

"Please pull yourself together. Are you eating your meals right? What about sleep? Eh, seems like you spent the whole day sitting again."

"I am eating right and sleeping well, I went to the dining room just 2 hours ago."

Shiroe replied casually as he stood up to take the box of files from Henrietta.

The strong physical abilities of Adventurers were based on the game stats, so there wasn't much of a strength difference between the 2 genders. No, compared to Shiroe from the mage class, Henrietta from the weapon-based class was probably twice as strong.

But seeing Henrietta wearing a secretary-style miniskirt and jacket with a corsage, Shiroe was unable to bear seeing her carry so many stacks of boxes.

Shiroe turned around after leaving the box on his desk.

"There is no need to trouble you with this, I will come over if you contact me by telepathy."

"Eh... I guess you are right... But I heard Shiroe-sama has been working so hard, so I thought about dropping by to visit... about that..."

"If you are looking for Akatsuki, she should be coming back soon."

"Ah, fu fu fu fu, it's not what you think."

Shiroe breathed a sigh of relief as Henrietta blushed.

The famed accountant that was the pride of Crescent Moon Alliance, Henrietta who was in charge of finance visited Shiroe like this often. The guild master of Crescent Moon Alliance was Maryele, but the operations were all handled by Henrietta, her administrative abilities were beyond praise. Instead of Shiroe who wasted his time on research and curiosity, Henrietta's contribution to the Round Table Council was much more significant.

"Eh, this is..."

"The Libra Festival."

Shiroe picked up a file as Henrietta explained from the side.

October. The air was becoming more chilly every time it rained, but the liveliness of Akiba remained warm. With the normalization of the relations with League of Freedom Towns Eastal, there had been more commercial exchanges stimulating the prosperity of the production guilds.

Food, clothes, machines, medicine, organic materials, and types of items were imported and exported at an astonishing rate. Akiba was now a city that focused on re-exporting after processing materials. Adventurers could gather basic items like food ingredients and minerals, but it was easier to get them in bulk by purchasing them from the People of the Land.

People of the Land, especially nobles and merchants, had a strong demand for goods made by Adventurers. They were very interested in finding out the secrets of their production and were very active in all kinds of trade.

As the production guilds became more lively, the battle guilds also reaped its share of the benefits. The 'Fairy Ring Analysis Project' that started last month resulted in tons of quests being given out, increasing the number of players going out of town for missions.

In this situation, the unexpected project that started was the Libra Festival. This event that the Adventurers of Akiba were looking forward to was a festival celebrated by the entire city.

When Elder Tales was a game, apart from events set by the developers, there were also plenty of unofficial activities organized by the players themselves.

There were all kinds of activities that spanned from an entire city to mega events that spanned the entire server. Unfortunately, there had been no news of such activities after the Catastrophe as no one had the energy to spare. But as life stabilized after 5 months, everyone should be anticipating this lively activity and letting go of the feelings of uneasiness after a while. Shiroe understood this point.

But instead of preparing for the Libra Festival, Shiroe was swamped with all sorts of administrative work, so he didn't know the details. He only took a glimpse through the memo that was sent to all the guild masters and had a very rough idea.

This was a trading activity that would be held in Akiba a few days later, that was what he thought.

"How is the liaison committee?"

"Charasin-san is working hard, I really take my hat off to him, the preparations are going smoothly."

Henrietta, who was arranging the files with her back to Shiroe, replied.

"As expected of the advertisement agency."

This project was directed by the production guilds and the 'Production Guild Liaison Committee'.

With the formation of the Round Table Council, there was a slew of new inventions bringing a boom to the economy of Akiba. The Round Table discussed issues regarding these new inventions but had finally

reached their limits. The Round Table Council was the governing organization that decided the general direction Akiba should take, it couldn't keep handling trade disputes or complaints.

Practical problems related to items and delivery didn't need to be strictly handled by the 11 guild masters, so they decided to set up a dedicated department.

That was the 'Production Guild Liaison Committee'.

The Production Guild Liaison Committee was situated 2 levels below the Round Table Council's conference room in the guild building and operated 24/7. It was manned by Adventurers who had nothing better to do and it was a laid back and kind committee. The liaison committee had the atmosphere between a conference room and an office, anyone could visit any time.

With their policy of revitalizing the small guilds, this place became the hang out for guilds with small guild halls. Michitaka from Oceanic Systems and Rodrick from The Rodrick Firm treated this place as the training ground for future leaders.

A big notice board was full of all sort of requests such as buying resources, trading items or information exchange. They could also source for new items and business partners, a noisy and lively urban community center. It was just a liaison committee and lacked the seriousness of the Round Table Council.

The Production Guild Liaison Committee was the organizer of the Libra Festival.

Crescent Moon Alliance was one of the small guilds that was part of the Round Table Council and should have plenty to work to do. Henrietta had had more work at the Production Guild Liaison Committee than she had at the Round Table Council recently.

"Will Crescent Moon Alliance be participating?"

"Of course we are. Our blacksmith will be selling short swords at the flea market, Crescent Moon will also be making a comeback. Serara is also working hard on this as the new kids didn't have a chance to eat it. But the main event will be the fashion show."

"Fashion show?"

"Yes, you didn't know?"

"No, I did hear about it..."

The idea of the Libra Festival started out by someone suggesting 'Let's hold a merchandise exhibition event alright?' at the Production Guild Liaison Committee.

The first thing the Adventurers who came to this alternate world desired was normal food and drinks. With this settled, the next was the increase in demand for a better living environment and fashionable clothes...

In the past when this was a game, your residence was just a place you used to log out. The furniture were

just toys to decorate your personal space that had wonderful variety but lacked functionality.

It was the same with dressing. Among the corporations that took part in Elder Tales development, F.O.E (Fujimi Network Entertainment) was a development agency reputable in design (Suitable for Otaku culture of Japan), but they did not consider functionality when they came up with their designs. They didn't even include underwear as part of the items that could be crafted in the game by Adventurers.

But such inconvenience had been solved recently. The Adventurers had been creative and came up with more inventions everyday.

But the citizens of Akiba might miss the information about unpopular items. The only way to get information about new inventions was by chance, word of mouth or the periodic advertisement fliers.

The proposal to host a merchandise exhibition event was started this way, and after much discussion, they would be holding a fashion show, underwear exhibition, food market, and an exhibition warehouse for new inventions. There had been increasing demand to include more items for the exhibition.

Most guilds had at least one product they would say "We're the best at!" and recommend strongly and wanted to exhibit to a wider audience.

'Since that's the case, let's hold a festival centered around exhibitions!' That was what they decided 2 weeks ago.

These discussions were held in the Production Guild Liaison Committee, but half the citizens of Akiba belonged to production guilds so the news spread like wildfire all over the city.

The production guild members were all participants, so pure tourists belonged to the minority. To be precise, only visitors from outside the city would meet this criteria.

And so, the exhibitors were also the customers, akin to a school cultural festival.

Shiroe had been focusing on using the Round Table Council as a way to gather information from the outside and had been neglecting the news within the city. "Neglecting" was based on Shiroe's standard, his knowledge of what was happening in the city was much higher than normal Akiba citizens'. Simply put, the knowledge he had did not meet his tactician level of standards.

Shiroe knew the story of how the festival started out, and understood that the exhibition would energize the economy (they just wanted to have fun under the pretext of work).

The organizer of the festival was not the Round Table Council, but the liaison committee working under it. Charasin of the 8th District Shopping Center was the reliable director of this activity.

This was the reason Shiroe decided not to be involved directly and left them alone.

"Shiroe-sama."

"Hmm?"

Henrietta said as Shiroe arranged the files neatly.

"How is Isuzu-chan doing?"

"Ah ah, ermm.... I have been meaning to talk to her properly one of these days, but I have been busy and it slipped my mind."

"Shiroe-sama is a good friend of Crescent Moon Alliance, so please don't hold back. But Serara has been worried about how she is doing."

"Yeah, she is doing well and keeping up with her daily training. She got a tan in the summer, since the only good thing about this place is that it's spacious."

The subject of the topic Isuzu was a young female Bard who transferred from Crescent Moon Alliance to Log Horizon. This young girl with freckles joined Log Horizon together with Rundelhaus.

The Sorcerer Rundelhaus and the Bard Isuzu, they were the 2 newest additions to Log Horizon since Tohya and Minori entered the guild. The transfer proceeded smoothly after a peaceful discussion between the 2 guild masters. Isuzu was also a beginner confined by the nasty guild Hamelin just like Minori. Her time in Crescent Moon Alliance was short and there wasn't much of a problem with the transfer.

Log Horizon and Crescent Moon Alliance had always acted like sister guilds, often holding beginner training session or forming raiding parties together. Even though Serara worried about Isuzu, they had still been meeting once every 3 days.

"Shiroe-sama hasn't gone out the entire summer."

Henrietta said reproachfully. This was the truth so Shiroe couldn't say anything to defend himself. Henrietta was a core member of Crescent Moon Alliance, had similar roles as adviser like Shiroe and was also handling the accounts for Crescent Moon Alliance. She must be busy, but Minori and the others said that she would occasionally show her face during beginner training sessions and participate actively. Henrietta's words were rather harsh to Shiroe's ears.

"... I am reflecting on that."

"Very well, please take a look at this."

Henrietta handed over something like a venue brochure. The copies of such printed materials could be duplicated using Shiroe's Scribe subclass. The original must have been hand written, but it was easy to make copies.

Shiroe browsed through it roughly, Akiba seemed to have several exhibition areas set up all over the city.

The content was mostly fashion and dining but there were also armor, weapons and furniture made from steel or wood. The festival eve events started the day after tomorrow while the actual festival would last for 2 days.

(The dinner party and the after-festival party...)

Shiroe confirmed the event dates and it overlapped with the return of the spy. The spy should be able to sneak in easily with the crowd during the festival, but it would take some effort to secure their reports.

(We can't make any reckless movements during the festival, guess we have to wait...)

Even if he wanted to gather more data, the intelligence they could collate during the festival would not be reliable.

"Really, why are you making such a face... Since Shiroe-sama is reflecting on his actions, you should say something right?"

"Ah?"

"For instance, use this festival as a chance to deepen your relationships with your friends in Log Horizon"

Shiroe was stunned by her words for a moment, but she did have a point and it was a good idea. He should be fine doing this once in a while.

"I will."

"Also..."

Henrietta shook her slender finger. Her actions together with her thin frame spectacles gave her an alluring air of mischief akin to an elder sister.

"Log Horizon is one of the representatives of the Round Table Council, please do your part to make this event lively."

"Ah... I will handle this appropriately."

"And that's a promise okay?"

Henrietta informed with a smile.

"Both Akatsuki-chan and Minori-chan are very cute, I am looking forward to it. Heavens, really... Just imagining it can let me go on without food. As the saying goes, 'People can't go on with only bread, but they can endure most hardships with bread and imagination'. My god..."

Henrietta who was twisting her body with her hands on her cheeks looked horrifying. Shiroe could not send his precious guild members to uncertain death, so he needed to find out the details of this 'promise'.

"What can they do to help?"

"It's very simple, they just need to help with the sales of winter clothes exhibition."

Being a salesgirl should have nothing to do with being very cute correct?

Shiroe saw through the blueprints of Henrietta's future plan and apologized to his guild members in his heart, thinking of how he could make it up for them.

Part 3

Raynesia was wearing comfortable casual clothes and sitting on the couch, enjoying her small lunchbox with pretty designs. This was a common take away lunchbox in Akiba.

(It's delicious...)

The vacation she was looking forward to.

Even as Raynesia immersed herself in this feeling of sweetness, her supple feminine body still trembled when she recollected her recent crushing work load. Raynesia sighed heavily and drooped her shoulders. Yes, she had been conned. Conned by Krusty.

She was baited by the sweet talk of '3 meals provided with afternoon nap included'. She was remorseful of her rash actions.

It was obvious if you thought about it.

The Adventurers were the key to influencing the world. The nobles of the League of Freedom Towns Eastal' which her grandfather chaired also knew this, and was attempting to recruit and use them in political and military terms. The reason Raynesia gave her speech in the nobles conference was because she could not stand their attitude and behavior.

Back then, she worked so hard as she wanted to protect her homeland and not force the Adventurers to accept their willful and rude demands at the same time.

In a sense, Raynesia's effort had borne fruits. With the kindness of the Round Table Council and the sense of justice of the Adventurers, her homeland Maihama and the League of Freedom Towns Eastal was saved.

After the war in Sand Leaf ended, the situation reverted back to the way it was. No, with the Adventurers showing their might to the aristocrats, the development that follows was much more concrete.

Adventurers didn't only show their military prowess, but also their advanced technology, economy, and unity as well. With their display of force, no nobles held any ambition of conquering Akiba and worked towards deepening their relationship with the Adventurers in order to increase their gain through taxes.

Raynesia had seen so many examples this month that it irritated her.

Raynesia took on the role of ambassador in Akiba under her grandfather's orders... her position was something between confinement and martial arts training. She was also the first residential ambassador from the League of Freedom Towns Eastal to coordinate relationships between the two groups.

She often received invitations from the Round Table Council to attend events like ceremonies, and would also participate in balls as a noblewoman. Thanks to her perfect lady education, these gatherings were

nothing to her (even though they were troublesome), but the problems lay elsewhere.

For example, clans who focused on business, which the Adventurers called 'production guilds', would visit her and ask her opinion on business matters. On the other hand, the merchants and nobles from the League of Freedom Towns Eastal would also ask her to introduce influential people in Akiba to them.

She needed to investigate the details thoroughly before handling such requests, or there would be trouble if she lost her reputation.

There would be no failures if she declined them all, but there were some request she could not reject in the social world. Even if she came from the most influential Dukedom in northeast Yamato, she was not the head of the family, just a granddaughter, so not everything went the way she wanted.

At the same time, she was amazed at the lack of schemes in the actions of the Adventurers. In their eyes, Raynesia was a direct descendant of one of the two Dukedoms in Yamato. Even if they were curious and treated her with respect, they didn't think they had to grovel at her feet.

They approached Raynesia as a Person of the Land to understand how a People of the Land might understand or feel about things, not to take advantage of her position for their own benefit.

They probably saw themselves as powerful Adventurers, and even if Raynesia was a noblewoman, she was just a Person of the Land in the end. That was what Raynesia felt.

From Raynesia's angle, this made her sad.

She was happy that the crowd didn't treat her like an aristocrat and saw her as another human being, but this joy and the pain were both sides of the same coin.

She was happy to be a common Person of the Land, but it pained her that she was a powerless noble.

(But, let's ignore this for now...)

This type of emotion was like a trap.

To fulfill the request, dignity and restriction of the nobles, she needed to learn more about the Adventurers and Akiba. Not only her, the People of the Land as a whole did not know much about the Adventurers, even the nobles. They assumed they understood each other because they shared a common language, but their lifestyle and culture had a major gap. In the process of trading or helping, there would be conflicts if they didn't have the minimum amount of knowledge, which had happened numerous time.

If she didn't advise the aristocrats and merchants this way and only help with introducing Adventurers and production guilds to them, it would cause major problems one day.

On the flip side, the problems with the Adventurers made Raynesia feel gloomy. Adventurers were very practical and wanted practical information. All the Adventurers were intelligent and educated, talking to them made her feel she and her country were ignorant of so much.

(Because I am not with the military, because I am not a bureaucrat, because I am not a man...)

Raynesia had not come into contact with the diplomatic issues facing her Dukedom clan for various reasons, and she thought this was obvious. But her conversations with the Adventurers made her realize she didn't even know what the citizens on the street or the farmers were eating, where they were living. What would interest them, what made them happy or sad.

It was acceptable if she didn't know about the Adventurers, but she didn't know the lives and hearts of her citizens either, making Raynesia realize what a shameful excuse of a noble she was.

In order to seriously deal with the requests of the nobles and the Adventurers, she would need to amass a wealth of knowledge and investigate them thoroughly. This made her so busy that the words '3 meals provided with afternoon nap included' had disappeared without a trace.

"Woo wah... This is never ending."

The worse fact was there were no limits to this type of knowledge. Even if thinking of a brilliant plan, advice or coordination, there was no guarantee that it was the best way.

If she considered it, or investigated it even more, there might be an even better idea. Or if planned more carefully, she might be able to avoid the worse outcome. These doubts lingered on in the corner of her mind 24 hours a day, even Raynesia who admitted she was lazy by nature was unable to cut corners.

Elissa lectured her when she collapsed with a fever after studying the books too hard. She did not remember the content of her preachings, but it was nice to have 3 days to recuperate.

"That's it, I'm not going to do anything!"

Raynesia enjoyed her lunch elegantly with her petite mouth.

Stewed vegetables, cold dishes and the brown object known as mini hamburger steak. This was a lunch that mixed western and Japanese styles.

From the perspective of aristocrats, the dishes packed inside the small box were vulgar and shabby, but Raynesia liked it a lot. Even if the dining table was full of roasted meat, stew meat and fried meat, she couldn't finish them and preferred her bread and fruits as she smiled. Her appearance, like this, had been described as delicate and ethereal which gave her a headache.

Comparatively, this small takeaway lunch box was a calming meal for her. The dishes after the revolution could not be compared to before, she couldn't remember her pre-revolution diet anymore.

Pickles and the rice, which Adventurers liked to eat, intrigued her, and the sweet omelette she loved were amazing. Raynesia carefully replaced the cover on the box after finishing and placed the fork on top. She was still trying to learn how to use the utensil chopsticks.

"May I have some tea Elissa?"

The room was cool and quiet.

Staying in this room like a bird in a nest and enjoying a meal without anyone disturbing, what more extravagant things could she ask for? Raynesia felt that there was nothing that could match this.

Maybe Raynesia thought she was enjoying a depraved moment. Having been trained from youth, even though she was not wearing a 2-piece velvet dress, she still could wear her clothes beautifully with a feeling of class and grace. She might think she was showing the lazy side of herself, but her casual dress made with linen and chiffon was still suitable for going out in the eyes of the Adventurers.

Her beautiful looks, reputed as the winter rose of Eastal, were the same as usual. Her casual clothes and her drowsy smile, as she ate, looked cute and fit her age.

A certain naggy maid might say 'your dress and attitude are outrageous', but Raynesia was determined not to let this 3 day recuperating period go to waste.

She must do her best to be lazy, to make up for the lazing around she had not done recently.

This was all the fault of the brain eating monster Krusty. She ended up like this because the lying knight with slits for eyes conned her.

Raynesia picked up the tea placed in front of her table and felt the steam with her face, thinking about how busy she had been. All her joints were numbed from comfort, a deep sense of fulfillment from eating and sleeping all she wanted.

Her sleep time had dropped recently and could only be described as cruel torture.

"Really, I have been so busy all because of that mischievous monster... I need to let him realize the difference in our power relationship some day."

Just as Raynesia sighed happily after enjoying the fragrance of her tea, a voice that shouldn't be there sounded out.

"I am very aware of this relationship, so there is no need to trouble the princess to teach me."

Krusty who was seated on the couch to Raynesia's right replied without missing a beat.

His tunic that was dyed in layers of brown just like the autumn leaves matched his black edged coat. His dressing was suitable for taking a stroll with the feeling of autumn giving Krusty a refreshing image.

The burly knight with a broad and strong upper body akin to a giant warrior, his strong limbs were long and well proportion. So if he walked on the streets in casual clothes, it wouldn't give off the impression of a giant, the contours of his face had the academic look of a scholar or researcher. His appearance maintained a feeling of neatness and cleanliness with absolutely no weak points to speak of. You couldn't find any even if you tried.

The ominous atmosphere he gave off in the battle field made him look like a giant warrior, but he looked

so gentle and quiet on the streets, this was definitely foul play.

Krusty appearing at an impossible timing made Raynesia repeatedly open and close her mouth in objection.

"Ah, ah, ahah!"

"It's fine if you want to scream or fidget around, but you probably should put this down."

Krusty said calmly as he took the ceramic tea cup from Raynesia's hands. His calm attitude made Raynesia's blood rush to her head and her unable to think properly.

"Why.... why!"

She was unable to collect her thoughts. (Why are you here? Who gave you permission? Isn't barging into a lady's personal room (this was an office, so this description was a bit wrong) outrageous?) The questions that came along with her anger rose and disappeared repeatedly.

Raynesia escaped by crawling to the edge of her couch. She moved at most a meter away. Considering the length of Krusty's arms, this was not enough, but she would fall off if she went any further.

"What... What is the..."

"If you are asking about the time, it should be 10 soon."

"How did..."

"Elissa-san let me in without saying a word."

"Why, why, why did..."

"I heard you were recuperating, so I came here to harass you."

Raynesia was speechless.

(He said harass. This monster said he came here to harass me with a straight face!)

"... ah."

"You say this is a prank?"

"Forgive my insolence. There were no other nobles around, so I bit my tongue by mistake. I am here to visit princess Raynesia, who is busy with work, and cheer you on."

Krusty was enjoying tea, from a similar teacup just like Raynesia's, as he replied in a leisurely and calm way. These words seemed to be decorated with lies and could not be trusted.

Raynesia maintained a defensive posture as she trembled (psychologically) at the corner of the couch. She

could hear Elissa warning her in her mind, 'The princess of Maihama that is the pride of Eastal cannot act so indecently', but even if Elissa said that to her face now, she wouldn't know what to do.

"Anyway, the joke ends here."

"Eh..."

"... How is the Libra Festival?"

Krusty casually asked and Raynesia realized this was the real topic for today.

Libra Festival was a festival that involved the whole Akiba city. Raynesia knew this was a celebration of peace and prosperity for the city. They would be displaying all kinds of items in the event to trade or sell. There wouldn't be any religious rites for the spirits or gods. No matter how you looked at it, it was just a normal city fair, much different from the festival Raynesia knew about. But the common thing would be people congregating together to have fun, at least that was what the report said.

The Libra Festival, where many Adventurers gathered to do business, should attract a lot of People of the Land businessmen to visit. Raynesia had already received such letters requesting Raynesia to introduce Adventurers to them.

"Yes, it is fine."

"So busy, so exhausting, so much responsibility."

He read minds again. Raynesia was scared, but was gradually getting used to it. She plead in her heart 'please don't do that' which was definitely conveyed to him, but he didn't show any mercy.

But despite the feeling of fear, she enjoyed her time conversing with Krusty. He was able to see through things that Raynesia found hard to say or wished he would notice.

"I am... doing my work properly"

"Yes, probably."

Raynesia retaliated slightly, but he just brushed it off with a sentence.

Seemed like the mind reading monster could not tell how much effort Raynesia put in and how difficult it was.

"..."

"What is it?"

"Nothing."

Raynesia turned her head away and adopted an ignoring attitude, disregarding the gentleman with a look of boredom on her face. (This is an act of attack. I will not be tempted by Krusty's sweet talk.) Raynesia

steeled herself as she averted her sideway gaze at Krusty away in a hurry. Snorting was too rude, so she would not do that (she didn't remember ever doing that).

"The preparation for the dinner party is going smoothly. Don't worry, I am doing it properly."

Raynesia's words surprised Krusty. Seemed like he thought Raynesia was useless. (If you think that, don't throw work at me okay?) Raynesia thought.

"... Ahah, you mean the dinner party hosted by the princess?"

Seemed like he just forgot about it.

This monster was infuriating.

The dinner party on the 2nd night was organized by Raynesia. The 'organize' here meant being the figurehead, Raynesia was unable to help in terms of preparation work and cooking duties.

Raynesia's duty was to attend this dinner party as the host and entertain the guests, running the place as the host. Even this level of dinner party in Akiba was simpler and less formal than many of the dinner parties Raynesia attended before.

Adventurers disliked hypocritical etiquette.

This understanding had slowly changed in the month Raynesia had spent in Akiba.

They didn't really dislike the etiquette, they just couldn't see the point in them. Since there was no point they were unwilling to learn, so they didn't have the knowledge of complicated etiquette.

Adventurers seriously lacked knowledge about this world and the People of the Land society. Raynesia felt they were like babies in this aspect.

(But the feeling must be mutual...)

Raynesia thought.

Raynesia worked closer with the Adventurers than other People of the Land, but when discussing among themselves, Raynesia was unable to keep up with half of their topics. Firstly, she didn't understand their technical terms so she didn't understand half of what they were saying. The part she did understand baffled her as to why they had such outrageous thoughts.

Adventurers did not even know the concept of nobles and peasants.

From the above example you could tell that both sides still had a long way to go.

But they would be able to close this gap in the future.

At least Raynesia thought so.

The reason why it was a dinner party and not a banquet was based on the same reason.

For banquets, the invited guests would be seated according to their status for dinner. The host Raynesia would be in charge of all the activities including dishes to welcome her guests.

The dinner party took a form that was unheard of by the People of the Land, it looked like a banquet but was a different form of dining. There would be all kinds of dishes that would be served to the table and replenished periodically. There was no fixed seating for the guests and they would stand and dine like a dance party.

The Round Table Council was the governing body and was very important, but in order to be accepted by the Adventurers as friends, it was important to interact with all sorts of people. Since the Adventurers did not like to differentiate between nobles and peasants, she would need to treat them all like nobles.

Raynesia requested the Round Table Council for help bearing this thought in mind to organize this grand scale dinner party.

This was her way to show her sincerity, gratitude and appreciation for the War of Sand Leaf.

The War of Sand Leaf 2 months ago still had lingering effects in this world, but the mop up operation had finally concluded. Raynesia welcomed the Libra Festival with this feeling in her heart.

Krusty was probably going to dump more work on her using some excuse, but she would not be conned this time. Raynesia steeled herself as she turned her head away.

She had finally been given some time of peace (as well as the delicious food in Akiba), no matter what she wanted to avoid working or getting involved in troublesome affairs.

But unexpectedly, Krusty did not mention any work (which always seemed easy at a glance) or troublesome issues after a long time and just sipped his tea quietly.

Time passed leisurely in the room.

(What is this monster thinking about...)

As Raynesia worried, the time continued to pass slowly.

The air that seemed to have a yawn mixed in came along with sleepiness. The sound of the festival preparation was like the sound of the tides from far away. The monotonous sound of the clock seemed like some evil magic luring her to sleep.

Raynesia had planned on spending the whole day dazing so this was not a problem. The couch was so soft and comfortable, she wanted to spend half the day just like this. This part was going as planned, but the problem was Krusty.

Even if Raynesia was a noble with an adventurous heart, she could not keep on dazing beside a man.

Raynesia peeked quietly and carefully at Krusty, he had placed the teacup on the table and was looking out the window at the street that seemed to be melting in the autumn sunlight.

Such a handsome profile. The current Krusty didn't have the vicious and murderous air he had while battling the goblins.

(Now that I think about it, he is a monster so he can see through all your thoughts.)

Raynesia felt relaxed as if she had just exorcised a demon possessing her heart.

Just a little.

About the distance of 2 palms.

Raynesia moved herself closer to the center of the couch.

The distance between the 2 closed just a little, but it was still enough for 2 Raynesias to sit between them.

Krusty shrugged without saying a word and continued to enjoy his tea on the couch for a long time.

Part 4

"I finished stacking them!"

"Yeah, same here."

Cheerful voices sounded out, informing the merchant group they had finished the preparation.

"Are you ready Rudy?"

"Roger Miss Isuzu."

Blond hair, blue eyes and a charming face, the handsome youth Rundelhaus replied to Isuzu as he tucked the map and small items into his backpack.

Isuzu had already finished arranging her stuff, she just needed to stand up and brush off the dust on her waist and she'd be done.

In this alternate world, outdoor activities really referred to the great outdoors. 'Just a trip to the convenience shop'... such feelings didn't exist. Even the inside of Akiba city was full of ruins and debris, it was a zone where the ancient trees flourished so much that it was practically a forest. Even more so when you left the city, the untamed nature and the circle of human civilization came together in both conflict and fusion.

The fashion of the Adventurers was usually flashy and elegant, but this was only under the premise of their superhuman stamina and their special ability of automatic cleaning.[\[1\]](#)

Isuzu thought that neat freaks... like the girls who invested lots of effort in fingernail painting, would have a very hard time here.

Fortunately Isuzu was not obsessed with cleanliness to that extent, she was the type who didn't mind getting a bit dirty doing work.

Transporting music instruments was tough work, a long period of performance took a lot of stamina. The wind instrument, which Isuzu was not proficient in, needed a certain level of lung capacity to play, the contrabass that Isuzu concentrated on was over 10kg in weight.

The brass band was a cultural organization, but it was more like a sports group.

(On top of that, I was a country girl.)

She shrugged as she finished her monologue in her heart. There would be toads croaking in the farm surrounding her school when spring arrived.

Isuzu was a Bard with freckles on her face and had a pair of bright eyes. She wore light leather armor and

tied her long hair in a braid. She carried a 2 handed spear that was not suitable for Bards on her back, that was her fighting style.

It had been 3 months since she left the guild Hamelin that oppressed beginners. She had grown accustomed to life as an Adventurer and was living everyday peacefully.

So she did not feel any pressure even while resting in the forest like this. She was fine with sitting on the tree trunk directly and would not fret about dirtying her buttocks, she thought she was not that type of 'girl'.

Even so, Isuzu's partner still treated her like a 'girl'.

"Miss Isuzu? Here."

Just as Isuzu was about to mount the horse, Rundelhous offered to give a hand and help push Isuzu up the horse. He then mounted his horse agilely with a hearty attitude that was not annoying at all.

"What is it Miss Isuzu?"

The young man turning to look at Isuzu with a surprised expression was Rundelhous Code.

He was a Person of the Land Adventurer. It sounded contradicting, but it made him a special and unique person in this world.

Blond hair, blue eyes with classy facial features, just like the prince that appeared in shoujo manga. With a hint of naive nature unique to the sons of rich families, his eyes were full of pride and strength.

But he was overly classy which made Isuzu see him as 'a puppy youth that looks like a golden retriever'. This youth had a lovable temperament.

"Is this really fine sir and lady Adventurers?"

"Yes, of course it's fine."

Isuzu replied.

The one asking was a Person of the Land leading a merchant caravan towards Akiba. If they left now, they should arrive in the evening.

Isuzu and Rundelhous, who met this merchant caravan while going out in the morning to train and farm monsters, were now escorting them to Akiba.

They were currently at 8 River Channels' High Coast, corresponding to Keihin port near Tamagawa river on earth.

This zone could be reached in 2.5 hours using horses unique to the Adventurers, a place Isuzu and Rundelhous loved to visit, although their reasons differed.

Rundelhous who was uncompromising in training would practice by himself on top of raiding with the

members of his guild. Any place was fine if it was meditation or practicing new spells repeatedly. But to increase his control and accuracy, the most suitable sparring partner... were monsters.

Being close to Akiba and having monsters that you could solo made this zone a perfect training ground. For Rundelhous, 8 River Channels' High Coast was a convenient place to do self training.

For Isuzu, she liked this strolling route.

She and her brave dog... Rundelhous would choose all kinds of routes when they went for their walk. But the route for 8 River Channels' High Coast was along the coast line, it had beautiful scenery and you could even see the ocean from here, a truly extravagant venue.

A one-way trip of 2 hours was rather far for a strolling route, but in this period where everyone was busy preparing for the festival and battle training was on hiatus, this was a good place to kill time.

... Isuzu did not forget their goal was to train the battle power of Rundelhous and herself. The best defense in this dangerous world was to level up.

You not only learned new skills when leveling up, your HP and all sort of defenses would also increase.

The damage you took from a monster was not only based on their attack strength, but also affected by its level difference with the player. Usually, the higher the level difference against the monster, the less damage you would take. If you trained through battle and levelled up, it meant you were safer from harm.

Isuzu almost lost Rundelhous once.

She didn't want to experience that again.

So they went out early in the morning and started training (or strolling) for a few hours before meeting this merchant caravan in the afternoon. It was a convoy of 5 horse carriages with 20 People of the Land. They seemed to have come from Izu and were heading to Akiba. The merchant caravan claimed to have heard news about the Libra Festival and were going there to sell their wares and purchase any goods that interested them.

Isuzu and Rundelhous discussed for a while.

In the wild open zone, there was a principle to the monsters they encountered in different terrains. The monsters in deep forest and hills were stronger than those outside, the closer you were to human civilization, there were usually less powerful monsters as well. This zone that was close to Akiba city was relatively safe.

But that was for Adventurers.

For the People of the Land, every journey was a series of dangerous events. Isuzu understood this. She had listened to Rundelhous talk about the People of the Land and knew how helpless their lives were in this world full of monsters.

After a short debate, they decided to escort this caravan to Akiba. The merchant caravan could make it to

Akiba even without their escort, but traveling merchants were always extra cautious.

This would only take half a day and they were just slowing their pace on the way back. They could continue with their training while escorting the convoy by taking out any monsters they encountered. Isuzu and Rundelhous offered to help after considering these points.

The People of the Land were hesitant at first but gladly accepted when they found out they just needed to treat them to a meal as reward.

(So they are hesitant about this part.)

Isuzu felt a bit sad, but decided not to brood about it since it couldn't be helped.

In the eyes of the People of the Land, Adventurers were an existence that was so close yet so far away. The People of the Land in Akiba were accustomed to living with Adventurers, but for those living in the rural areas, Adventurers were like alien beings. Rundelhous reminded Isuzu of this point time and again.

The merchant caravan continued their advance along the gently undulating slopes under the bright autumn sun. The noise the carriage made were unexpectedly loud. The wooden carriage lacked cushions or shock absorbents and reflected the uneven surface of the ground with its rattling sound.

Just listening to this sound was enough to make you think it could fall apart anytime, but it seemed to be ruggedly made. The carriage that had been reinforced with steel bracing at all its crucial points moved slowly with its full load of cargo.

"Mr Merchant, may I ask what are you carrying in the carriage?"

Rundelhous asked peacefully on their leisure journey home. The leader sitting on the driver's seat was conversing with a young man in the cargo compartment, but he looked out when he heard Rundelhous.

"Adventurer-san, our goods are mainly fruits such as oranges, kumquats, and olives. We also brought some food seasoning and wine. We are hoping to purchase clothes and utensils for our journey back."

"That explains the fragrance!"

Isuzu nodded repeatedly after hearing the response.

A fresh and sweet fragrance filled the air around the carriage. There were less fresh fruit during this season, so this must be the smell of candied fruits.

Adventurers were basically rich and generous compared to People of the Land, so they were great customers for business.

"Correct, this is the glazed fruit we are proud of, I hope the people of Akiba will enjoy them."

Rundelhous nodded to acknowledge the leader's business smile.

"Speaking of which, I have seen a lot of merchants these few days."

"Of course, it is the autumn festival after all!"

Isuzu thought about it after retorting to Rundelhou. Rundelhou was a young man who was obsessed with improving himself and had been working hard in battle magic training like an obligation. They made this long trip today for training as well, but things could go wrong if Rundelhou kept going on like this... Isuzu was worried. As the guardian of this silly, stubborn, and straightforward young man, stopping his reckless ways was Isuzu's duty.

(Rudy should have a bit of fun too!)

Since this was decided, the rest was simple.

Isuzu listed out some place she wanted to visit. Festival meant music, music meant celebration. There were so many things she wanted to see and so many things she wanted to eat. She wanted to attend the campfire concert even if she had to drag Rundelhou there with a leash on his neck. She heard that the concert also welcomed Bards to join in onsite.

"Do any merchants travel by sea?"

"Yeah there are. Like the merchants of Ninetails recently."

"... Ah ah."

"Their situation has calmed down so it is safe to travel by ship. I heard the merchants from the west this time will be coming via sea. With the invention of the fairy ship, their speed is now much faster. But common traders like us have nothing to do with these."

Isuzu concentrated on planning the schedule for the evening and didn't notice the pained expression on Rundelhou's face. But she was not at fault since Rundelhou showed the restraint of adolescence and wiped this expression away in a blink of the eye, even the merchant talking to him didn't feel anything out of place.

The scene of a grand explosion collapsing structures and leaving debris described the south of Akiba perfectly. They would be able to see the greenery of the ancient trees after passing through.

They were still several hours away from Akiba but they could see other caravans or a lone businessman walking with goods strapped to his horse. Everyone seemed to be rushing to Akiba.

Akiba was holding an autumn festival.

The 2 escorts remained alert as the caravan headed towards their home city.

Part 5

"I have brought your laundry my lord."

The one pushing the door open with her back was Akatsuki.

(I still don't get our lord-ninja relationship.)

Shiroe thought as he helped her place the pile beside a table. Shiroe's room was a spacious 20 tatami^[2] wide area. The only good thing about the guild house of Log Horizon was its vast amount of space. After remodeling several times, a third of the space on the east side of the 2nd floor was used by Shiroe.

A computer or even a flash drive amount of information in the old world was equivalent to several cabinets of files in this world. No matter how you organized them it was still inefficient to search for the data you wanted, but this was the only way to collate information.

"You seem to be not well?"

Akatsuki gazed up from below surprising Shiroe. This petite and beautiful girl was unaware of her own charms. She was always looking straight ahead, so when Shiroe saw her big, black, and shiny eyes and lips that sparkled alluringly like pudding face to face, his heart would race and his emotions got awkward.

(And recently...)

There had even been signs before, but Akatsuki was getting better at sneaking up on him. Maybe it was her small stature or her Tracker and Assassin abilities, she was always appearing in surprising places when Shiroe was distracted.

Without even stretching his hands, he could already feel her body warmth just by bending a little. This distance made Shiroe uncomfortable, but Akatsuki didn't seem to mind as she showed her concern for Shiroe like some small animal.

"Not really."

"Is that so."

Akatsuki did not continue after responding and started folding the laundry on the sofa. These were casual wear clothing that had dried after airing them on the floor above.

The armors and robes that Adventurers equipped has a set durability. It became dirty and worn out as it suffered damage, but it became as good as new after repair by people with the corresponding subclass, so there was no need to wash them.

But Adventurers and the People of the Land had recently started to manually craft items by hand. These

could become dirty and damaged but could not be repaired using the game menu, so it needed to be washed manually.

White shirts fluttering on the laundry line was not a bad sight. Doing laundry was one of the more popular chores among Log Horizon members.

There were very few clothes.

They finished folding a short while later with them working together. Akatsuki poured black rose tea into a glass and took out her snack of the day, seemed like red bean bun. Bread was a staple food in Yamato since wheat was grown everywhere. There was rice in Yamato as well, but bread lasted longer without going bad after baking. With the advent of cooking research, all kinds of bread started to appear in the market.

The new products were expensive at first, but the prices gradually dropped after mass production kicked in. Since the consumers' habits didn't change, this business phenomenon remained the same in this world.

The price of this plain looking red bean bread had fallen a lot, but it was still expensive for a snack. Holding a bun with her left hand, Akatsuki handed the plate with the remaining bun over to Shiroe.

"Is it fine?"

"My treat, I hope my lord will appreciate it."

Akatsuki replied curtly, Shiroe was not sure how to react to her invitation.

Shiroe hadn't been out to the field lately as he was busy with administrative work for the Round Table Council. Akatsuki who had been training with Minori and the other beginners out in the field had money to spare, so Shiroe wasn't worried about the cost. But as a guild master and a young man, letting a little girl (appearance wise) treat him felt awkward.

Shiroe also felt this was a childish pride, but it was an emotional problem so it couldn't be helped that he showed some hesitation. But it would look bad if he declined out of pride so Shiroe accepted the bun with gratitude.

Akatsuki started eating her share as Shiroe took the plate. The 2 of them sat side-by-side on the sofa relaxing their feet and enjoying the sweet red bean paste.

"..."

"What is it Akatsuki?"

"Eh, that..."

Akatsuki eyes wandered around the room as she thought about how to say this.

"My lord, do you..."

"?"

"Have any plans for the festival?"

"Ah?"

Shiroe didn't know how to react to her question.

Henrietta did ask him to help with some things. And his guild members might forget his face if he stayed in his office all the time.

"I will be helping Henrietta-san with some events. I heard it is a fashion show... seems like she needs to visit several places."

"I see... I am not asking about that."

"?"

"Shiroe-san!"

Minori barged into the room, holding a brown paper bag carefully with both hands. When she discovered Akatsuki was present, she braked and stopped immediately.

The stammering Minori was wearing her favorite blouse with a big bow and her knee length denim skirt. The girl wearing fashionable clothes found commonly in the streets, answered Shiroe's questioning gaze after hesitating a moment.

"Shiroe-san, that, regarding the Libra Festival tomorrow, do you want to go out together?"

"Go out?"

"Wrong, I mean do you want to eat together?"

Minori handed him a flyer with bright words "All you can eat cakes" printed on it. Shiroe didn't get it and turned to Akatsuki for an explanation. Akatsuki gave a serious expression as she held an identical flyer in front of her chest.

"Do you hate sweet things Shiroe-san?"

"No I don't."

"I can tell from the way you ate the red bean bun."

Shiroe preferred food with just the right amount of sweetness.

"Let's participate my lord, there is no charge for mixed gender pairs that participate."

"Want to join this Shiroe-san? It's free okay? Free!"

According to the flyer, the rules for participating was 1 male and 1 female... meaning mixed gender pairs,

time limit was 45 minutes, it was free of charge if you finished 8th place, and the top 2 couples could advance to the official match.

(So 4 for 1 person...)

This amount should be a piece of cake, but Shiroe felt the 2 of them were abnormally passionate about this. He must be imagining things, but there seemed to be a bit of hostility between the 2 of them. Shiroe was concerned about this, but for some reasons, he hesitated about asking them directly.

(Ah, now that I think of it, in the past...)

Correct, it was the same in the past.

He recollected that it was the same in the Debauchery Tea Party. It was always the female players who made willful demands with 'her' being the biggest culprit. Shiroe sighed in his heart when he thought about this. If all the women had the same nature (and that was highly possible), it would not be wise to decline them.

"How about it Shiroe-san..."

"My lord, my lord!"

Shiroe could only raise his white flag and surrender when pressured by these 2 young girls.

CHAPTER.

2

SWALLOW AND STARLING

[燕 と 雛 棕]



▶ NAME: ISAAC

▶ LEVEL: 90

▶ RACE: HUMAN

▶ CLASS: GUARDIAN

▶ HP: 14009

▶ MP: 6768

▶ ITEM 1:

[SWORD OF PAINBLACK]

PHANTASMAL-CLASS WEAPON WHICH DROPPED FROM WHAT WAS KNOWN AS THE WORLD'S FASTEST PHANTASMAL-CLASS DROP FROM THE "RHADAMANTHYS" THRONE" RAID. HOLDS AN ABILITY COVETED BY GUARDIANS WHERE A FIXED RATIO OF DAMAGE RECEIVED IS REFLECTED AS HATE.



▶ ITEM 2:

[NAMED GUILD TAGS]

DOG TAGS MADE IN THE SHAPE OF THE BLACK SWORD BY CRAFTSMEN IN AKIBA AFTER THE CATASTROPHE. MEMBERS WHO WEREN'T LOGGED IN HAD ONE MADE TOO, ISAAC HOLDS ON TO THESE.



▶ ITEM 3:

[ARMOR OF DIVINE FLAME]

PHANTASMAL-CLASS ARMOR THAT REQUIRES BOTH "FANTASY CRIMSON METAL" AND "TATARA REALM'S GOD" QUESTS TO BE CLEARED. HAS HIGH FLAME AND COLD RESISTANCE, AND SETS VARIOUS BASIC ABILITIES TO A HIGHER LEVEL.





くブリキのカップ
旅のおとも。時には楽器。

あの演説のとき、シロエはレイネシア姫を虐めているように見えた。その辺りからシロエのイメージは「参謀肌で有能だが冷酷で人情味のない策士」というものになってしまったようだ。

それがミノリには辛い。

ミノリにとって、シロエはヒーローなのだ。

みんなはわかっていないが、シロエは優しい人間である。シロエほど優しいプレイヤーは滅



This wouldn't do, that wasn't right either. She held each piece to her body to look, but her frantic heart felt none of them would do. She didn't throw the clothes aside but folded them neatly instead; this was just Minori's style. Her mental state, however, was utter exhaustion.

Minori could participate in the cake-eating contest since Shiroe agreed, but her aim wasn't the free cakes. This was all for Shiroe and Log Horizon.

(This one feels a bit childish, this one matches with Tohya.. that one is... too plain... I'm not looking for working clothes!)

Minori folded the green overalls carefully.

This was her private room.

Having been forced to share a common room with many others during her times in Hamelin, it still seemed too extravagant for her.

When she joined Log Horizon, she wanted to share a room with Tohya since she didn't want to trouble the others. But Shiroe and Naotsugu said: "The building is big so there is no need to hold back" and prepared this private room for her.

It would be rude to compare her room in Hamelin to this room. The breezes that flowed through the window were one of Minori's joys.

The decorations of the room were not luxurious. It was 10 tatami large even though it was a private room and the floors and walls were made of wood. There were few furniture items in this big room; only a few boxes, a bed, and a coffee table.^[3]

Since the guild acknowledged this to be her room, Minori could decorate it in anyway she wanted. If she requested it, everyone would definitely help her move her furniture and might craft something for her too. But Minori was thrifty and humble by nature, so she was hesitating on buying anything expensive.

Her income was quite luxurious for a mid-level player.

The reason for this was her living here and going out periodically to hunt monsters. The main purpose of hunting was to train the teamwork of Minori, Tohya, Rundelhaus and Isuzu. Even if it was training, they still received loot from defeating monsters.

Animal-type monsters leave meat or skins behind and intellectual-type monsters drop equipment and valuable items. There were many rewards from winning battles. These items were known collectively as 'drop items'; most of them could be exchanged for gold or used as crafting ingredients.

For Log Horizon, ingredients that either Nyanta and Shiroe could use as Chef or Scribe would be stored, the rest would be sold for money.

They deposited large amounts of their earnings secretly to the guild account. They didn't do this because someone suggested it, it was a habit the youth group (the name the low-level members called themselves) learned unconsciously as a way to show their appreciation.

But they couldn't do that when Naotsugu and Nyanta were leading them. The money was split evenly to everyone. According to Nyanta, 'Receiving the appropriate reward is how you develop professionalism nya~'. Minori understood what he meant but she was unable to accept it.

It was the same with her comrades; they felt indebted to Shiroe and Log Horizon.

This guild also had Nyanta the Chef.

The biggest expenditure in Akiba currently was food.

Utility bills consisted of lamp oil and half the players could replace it with their magic. Accommodation expenses, either the hotel room fee or the guild hall rental fee, was surprisingly cheap. If one really needed to, there were countless ruins for one to camp in.

So in Akiba, the bulk of the living expenses lay in eating, so the Engel's Coefficient of the Adventurers was miserable. [\[4\]](#)

Most Adventurers spent half their income on food; the ratio was comparable to housing in the old world.

But thanks to Nyanta cooking the meals, Log Horizon members could avoid the money sink for the most part.

Even if Minori and the others deposited money into the guild account, it didn't mean that they had no savings. Minori had accumulated quite a sum of money.

So there was still room for further expenditure.

Furnishing her room was easy... but she needed to restrain herself too.

This world was originally a game, so there was a huge variety of items. Take beds for instance. From simple wooden frames to beds carved from ivory or obsidian, or a princess bed with a canopy like a piece of art, there was a wide assortment of designs. Beds were crafted by production subclass Carpenters, but as they increased their levels, they would continue to create higher-level and more difficult to make beds that they could sell for a higher price. So while the same bed had different varieties, the price might differ by a hundred-fold.

Very expensive items existed, but if you chose the cheaper variety, furniture was not really expensive. This was something that was available when Elder Tales was still a game, so it could be made in 10 seconds using the game menu. The factor affecting price was the difficulty in getting materials and the level of the craftsman. Time was not an issue.

Beds and wardrobes crafted using cedar or oak trees could be purchased with gold equivalent to 1 meal.

But Minori only bought a few wooden chests for storage, a simple but comfortable bed, a coffee table similar to a kotatsu, a futon set and some cushions.

This room was very plain.

Minori's nature was not suitable for splurging.

And that was why Minori's dresses were all tailored, well-fitted, strong and durable, and gave a clean and neat feeling when you walked by her in the streets. It was not shabby or shameful to wear but... it was not eye-catching enough.

(This won't do...)

Minori placed a light blue dress onto her body but it felt too childish. She felt this dressing would not match well with Shiroe.

(I need to buy better dresses...)

Minori made up her mind and opened her small purse. The traditional style purse belonged to Minori. When this world was still a game, money was weightless and could only be seen on the character's screen. Now, they had to be carried in wallets, which had become unexpectedly popular items.

Minori's goal was to restore Shiroe's reputation.

Instead of restoring his reputation, it was more like making public appearances and propagating his image.

To be honest, Shiroe's reputation was really bad in Akiba. Shiroe was one of the eleven guild masters of the Round Table Council, so he was more famous now.

The Round Table Council was set up according to Shiroe's plan. Those who were well-informed in Akiba knew about this. The problem was not about fame, but rather why he was famous.

Shiroe was a tactician-type character and everyone agreed with this. After gaining the nickname 'Black Heart Glasses', however, the scheming and merciless image had spread all over the city.

The crucial blow seemed to be Raynesia's speech.

Shiroe had looked like he was bullying Raynesia in that speech. Shiroe's image had evolved into 'A competent but cold and merciless tactician'.

This made Minori sad.

Shiroe was a hero in Minori's eyes.

Nobody knew about the kind and gentle Shiroe. Minori believed there were very few players who were as gentle as Shiroe.

Wasn't Shiroe the only one who tried to help the beginners confined by Hamelin? No one but Shiroe was willing to step up and face the situation that everyone else ignored.

Shiroe was a hero in Minori's heart.

Minori was sad that so many people misunderstood Shiroe. Logically, this would also definitely leave a shadow on the future operation of the guild. Log Horizon was one of the many small guilds in Akiba and there was no telling what damage this negative image might cause.

At the very least, Minori knew Shiroe was kind and gentle. She liked everyone in Log Horizon and this was now her home, so she wished to dispel any bad rumors.

This festival was the chance.

Shiroe had to take some responsibility for the outside world's strange view of him.

Shiroe who did planning and research work did not attend professional gatherings like the production guild leaders. He also had no chance to interact with other players like the battle guilds and go raiding.

Guild masters of major guilds treated advertising and recruitment as an official guild activity, at least that was what Minori heard. Even players who didn't like to interact with others would socialize without hesitation at public events. The guild masters were usually friendly and serious players.

Comparatively, Shiroe didn't mind crowds but he rarely attended such activities. He had been buried in his work recently and had been staying indoors all the time.

So the source of the problem was that Shiroe didn't go out enough which could be solved by introducing Shiroe to Akiba. Take the cake-eating contest for example; if they won in the contest, they would be invited to the large scale dinner party on the last night of the festival. She heard Akikuro (Akiba news) would also be present, if everything went well...

Minori fantasized for a while but pulled herself back into reality.

(But, but, we will be eating cake together, so it will be a problem if I dressed too plainly...)

Usually, the city would not change its perception of Shiroe unless he solved a major problem or gave a moving speech. But Minori remained optimistic.

(Shiroe-san is handsome so that is not an issue.)

She conveniently forgot that this was just her personal opinion. The handsome Shiroe might just be the delusion of a young girl.

At this point, no one thought the truth behind Minori's feelings was a problem.

No one could tell if this emotion was from the trust of a guardian or a faint sense of longing, or something even more concrete.

Minori herself didn't give a name to this feeling in her heart.

Part 2

Akatsuki was aware of her symptoms.

She returned to her room like Minori and sat on the tatami silently like an ornament, but her heart was in chaos.

Akatsuki looked very cute sitting properly on her cushion. Her long black and lustrous hair that flowed behind her along with her petite body gave the impression of a small, prestigious animal. [\[5\]](#)

No matter how small she was, she was still a college student. Her knowledge definitely won over a middle-schooler. But being unable to say she had more 'experience' made Akatsuki sad. She was aware of her lack of experience which made her panic even more.

(Why must I feel pressure from a middle-schooler...)



しかし、いくら身長が低くても、彼女の中身は大学生である。中学生であるミノリとは決定的に情報量が違う。「経験の量が違う」と言い切れない辺りがアカツキの悲しさだが、その辺は彼女自身も自覚しているので、なおさらに動揺が激しいのだ。

（なんだって中学生にプレッシャーをかけられなければならないのだっ）
膝を抱えたまま悶えてしまうアカツキ。

恋愛の経験がない上に、余計なコンプレックスの多い彼女は、この状況で冷静さを保つなど

Akatsuki writhed(?) in depression as she hugged her knees.

With her lack of experience in love and her unnecessary inferiority complex, she was unable to keep calm in this situation. Her restraint had not improved with age.

In the end, the culprit was her height.

Akatsuki sighed and recollected about the past while touching her hair fringe.

Grade school was fine, she had looked her age.

Next, she became a middle-school girl that still looked like a grade-school girl.

When she moved on to high school, she became a highschool girl that still looked like a grade-school girl.

When she had become a college student, she was finally mistaken for a middle-school girl, but she had lost all her strength and will to joke about it.

Akatsuki thought her looks were fine but she didn't have experience with love. Men who approached her misunderstood something and harbored a certain special interest. She had no expectations to date normally under such an environment.

Someone confessed to her before.

(But that is...)

Akatsuki drooped her shoulders dishearteningly.

The year she was accepted into college, a middle-school boy who lived in the neighborhood confessed to her, thinking she was a middle-school girl from another zone. Of course, Akatsuki rejected him, but the impact was so great that she collapsed from illness; it still left an ache in her heart.

Even then, it was not necessary for Akatsuki to get into a relationship. She was interested in boy-girl relationships at her age, of course, but she had not yet reached the point of 'Anyone will do, I want to try being in a relationship'. She also felt foolish to hold such expectations without anyone specific in mind.

Akatsuki wished for a more sensible relationship based on ability instead of appearance. Akatsuki was treated more like a mascot wherever she went because of her cute appearance and small stature. Even her younger sister treated her like a junior sibling at home.

So she longed for a relationships of partners, comrades, or colleagues. Being a subordinate or henchman was fine too; she longed for a relationship that acknowledged each others' strengths and made up for each others' weaknesses.

Because no one had ever treated her this way.

She was hardworking by nature and would focus tirelessly and sincerely on whatever goal she set. But her efforts did not get the proper recognition because of her cute appearance. That was the reason why she role-played as a silent Assassin in Elder Tales.

(But that was only until the Catastrophe.)

That terrible incident made everything change.

The only good thing that happened in that hellish and confusing event was meeting Shiroe. After Shiroe, there was Naotsugu and Nyanta, as well as a guild she now called home... Log Horizon.

Akatsuki made true friends for the first time in the Elder Tales that became an alternate world. These were relationships that wouldn't ridicule or spoil Akatsuki because of her height.

But she was still being treated like a mascot.

Her appearance was a part of her and wouldn't change in the future. This could not be helped and she had accepted it now. Because she understood strength, ability could be confirmed through 'sight' just like appearance.

Just by simply checking the status screen, one could see strength clearly... 'level' was Akatsuki's gospel.

You could earn the respect of everyone simply by sincerely doing your part in the team. There might be many horrifying or painful things in this world, but Akatsuki thought this point was great.

Shiroe gifted her an Appearance Reset Potion not long after the Catastrophe happened so she addressed Shiroe as 'my lord' to express her gratitude. She wanted her strength to be recognized and was willing to take on the role of subordinate to prove herself.

She would not accept any thoughts of 'I will help you for free since you are a little girl'.

But Shiroe was a 'lord' greater than she had realized. Shiroe was generous, tactically brilliant, had foresight beyond her ability, and had the strong will to choose the future. Akatsuki was very glad to be 'partners' with Shiroe.

And if Shiroe had a weakness, it was his battle prowess.

Shiroe's attack was generally too weak to end battles. Akatsuki was able to assist Shiroe on this point and Shiroe seemed to acknowledge her pro-level performance.

As a person living in the modern world, Akatsuki was afraid of fighting monsters to the death, but she had learned Kendo when she was young, so this was an obstacle that she could tackle. Being acknowledged for the ability to fight well was better than the shameful feeling of not getting acknowledgement anywhere.

She might look like a fiercely loyal shinobi to others, but Akatsuki thought there was a good reason and it matched her goal... But hiding her bashfulness played a big part in it too.

It didn't take long for her feelings to grow deeper along with her trust. What instigated it, when did it start, Akatsuki didn't know. She just felt a ticklish and comfortable space in her heart when she was by Shiroe's

side.

(So it started when we rode the griffon?)

Her expression relaxed as she recalled the feeling of riding the griffon.

The feeling of acceleration like you were in free-fall and the thrill that she felt in the strong wind. Her feelings when she clung onto Shiroe's back or stayed in his arms brought her immense excitement and comfort.

This might be the Suspension-Bridge Effect, but that was not important. Akatsuki felt attracted to him.

She would feel happy just by staying by Shiroe's side, she was so obsessed that she was seriously practicing hiding and walking silently.

Akatsuki found it hard to express this feeling in words; it was too embarrassing to say it even in her heart. Simply put, she liked him. Akatsuki was aware that their genders played a part in liking him.

From the way Akatsuki saw it, it would be fine even if she was not aware.

The 'partner' Akatsuki was searching for was someone who respected her and would accept her as a companion. Even though she liked him, she didn't need him to reciprocate the same way. More importantly, Akatsuki found this comfortable feeling recently.

Like the flower she was nursing in her heart, like music without sound(?), Akatsuki lived everyday filled with happiness as long as she held on to this feeling.

But Minori appeared at this moment.

Akatsuki held nothing against Minori personally. Minori was serious, kind, smart, and hardworking; there was nothing for her to pick on. Akatsuki treated her like a good comrade and a cute junior. Akatsuki's depression came from her own bad luck.

... Or rather good luck.

She got away from the prejudice of being treated like a middle-school girl and met a nice group of companions who saw her as one of them. These companions moved her heart. This was a good and fortunate thing. Akatsuki could feel that these companions did not dislike her. This was a joyful experience.

But her love rival that appeared was a real middle-school girl and it made her wonder what were the causes and effects that led up to this.

(Woo... Am I really the standard-bearer for lolis...)

Akatsuki was tempted to throw her cushion out and use Assassinate.

"Now that I think about it, this is not too bad... probably."

Akatsuki had an inferiority complex about her appearance. She was cute, but that was the cuteness of a mascot, not as an object of love, correct? Akatsuki was unable to wipe away her doubts. That was why it was fortunate that Minori was her love rival. She was a real middle-school girl so Akatsuki wouldn't lose in body figure. But still she seemed to be bound to the middle-school girl category.

Akatsuki raised her head as she thought of this.

Akatsuki took out a similar flyer because she was provoked and her competitive nature stirred. But that meant she needed to go on a date, right? She needed to be totally prepared for this.

Akatsuki panicked suddenly and fidgeted distractedly on the cushion.

Since it was a date, she would need to dress up for it right? Impossible! Akatsuki shook her head. It was really impossible in her situation, she only had clothes that were as black as ink. She had some feminine dresses for social events back on earth, but she only had dark colored costumes used by Assassins in this Elder Tales world.

She had no need to improve her wardrobe seeing as she could perform her duties as a ninja serving her lord, Shiroe, with no problems.

But it would be bad to go on a date in these clothes.

(Wait, how about the setting of a shinobi accompanying her lord on a mission?)

Akatsuki nodded her head. Shiroe was eating free cakes and she was tagging along officially as his bodyguard, this setting would work. Akatsuki shook her head just as she was starting to relax. This setting was too unreasonable no matter how you put it. And the one who proposed this out of her competitive nature when Shiroe was in trouble was Akatsuki herself.

If she changed her stance tomorrow and said, 'Do you want to eat my lord? I am your bodyguard', Shiroe would look at her with pitiful eyes. Shiroe might even be disheartened and give up on her.

(Well then, I will need Henrietta's help...)

Akatsuki thought about that but was reluctant to do so. Even if she ignored Henrietta's doting actions, the problem was her taste in clothes trended towards young girls' fashion. It might be useful in other cases, but she wouldn't stand a chance in winning against a real middle-school girl this way.

In the end, it would be best to pick her own dress.

Akatsuki sprang up from the tatami as she thought of this.

The gentle rain covered Akiba like a mist, but the afternoon sun still shone brightly.

There must be many fashionable handmade dresses she could buy in the central square.

Part 3

An impetuous noisy atmosphere shrouded Akiba.

The Adventurers were rushing to complete the setup of their stalls for the festival, but they were not the only ones who were busy.

Just like Akatsuki and Minori, people would want to do something when there was a festival. Since this was a major event that encompassed the whole of Akiba, not only the production guild players, but all the Adventurers living in the city were involved. Wrong, even the People of the Land were also helping with the preparations.

For example, Chefs who wanted to cook special food that day would need to gather resources, those organizing a banquet would need to buy ingredients or fruits. With resources running low, visiting merchants had become popular in the city. There was a significant increase in Adventurers farming monsters for drop items while female Adventurers worried about buying fashionable dresses just like Akatsuki.

The clearing of debris to widen the space in the city square was also ongoing in concert with the festival preparation in Akiba, albeit less passionately. The notice boards were updated with new official quests announced by the Round Table Council everyday. The guilds would want to revamp the outside of their building to welcome the festival with a refreshing look, as expected of Japanese culture.

The specialized jobs of Carpenters and furniture craftsmen increased as well and the workshop would continue to be lively for the next few days.

The busiest group in Akiba was the Production Guild Liaison Committee and its central figure was Charasin, guild master of 8th District Shopping Center.

Charasin cursed and swore: 'It's like I have been cursed from everywhere'. But he continued to use telepathy to coordinate all the necessary tasks.

He enjoyed chatting and had many friends, but he did not expect the telepathy calls to flood in like this. The endless enquirers bound him to the room with no reprieve. This was all the fault of that glasses wearing young man with nasty eyes.

Adventurers revered 8th District Shopping Center as one of the 3 major production guilds, but the truth was a bit different.

8th District Shopping Center was not a production guild.

It was a chatting guild.

As seen from its name, it was a guild used for chatting. When the world was still a game, some of the players played this game in order to chat with others. They still went on adventures, collected and crafted items, but these were just topics they used for conversations, chatting was their main form of enjoyment in this game.

The period with the biggest crowd in Elder Tales was from 8pm to midnight after dinner. Many players logged in during this time to chat leisurely with their friends.

These chatty players were totally the opposite of gaming fan players who enjoyed challenging raids.

The guild formed by these chatty players was 8th District Shopping Center. Doing business was just a channel to talk about things, 8th District Shopping Center started trading because it was interesting to interact with customers.

Compared to The Rodrick Firm that collected phantasmal ingredients to craft rare equipment, or the production guild Oceanic Systems that was formed to deal with the Adventurers' need for ingredients, they had a fundamental difference.

The position of the guild master also differed from Rodrick of The Rodrick Firm and Michitaka of Oceanic Systems. Charasin was the head of a congregation of merchants in 8th District Shopping Center, not a ruler holding great authority. He might be the representative, the face dealing with the outside, but although the members respected him, they didn't swear their fealty to him.

But as the head and central figure of a chatting guild, his friend list had 980 names, barely safe from the system limit.

Charasin utilized this network to receive reports continuously.

"Yes, understood! I will inform Zhuge Liang-kun."

"Hmm? Ahah, that is too expensive right?"

"Wrong... You cannot... do... that. The Liaison Committee must not be biased towards anyone, the position of the stalls will be decided by drawing lots, we need to be firm about this."

Charasin changed his telepathy calls continuously as he made all sorts of notes on the paper in front of him.

There was an enormous pile of planning reports and application forms, the mess was larger than in Shiroe's room.

"Yo."

"Ah, Michitaka-san."

The burly man entering the room was Michitaka. Michitaka dropped the scrolls of documents he was holding under his armpits on the table and looked around the room.

"Hey hey hey, are you doing this alone?"

Charasin replied to Michitaka with a smile.

"This is expected, my organization that is akin to a gathering of individual merchants will be interested in doing business in a festival of this scale, I want to take part myself too."

"Aye, you are right."

Michitaka had a burning smell on him. He was a Blacksmith who came directly from his workshop. Oceanic Systems might be the biggest production guild in Akiba, but their leader seemed to prefer crafting items personally.

"For my side, it is like a shared workspace with the main focus of making good items for sale, we are not proficient in trading and bargaining. I will leave this part to you, but you should enjoy this exhibition like visiting a festival as well."

There were several types of players who focused on production in MMORPG. Players similar to Charasin who enjoyed chatting; players like Michitaka who mass produced items in the workshop and enjoyed the game like a crafting simulator; or collectors similar to Rodrick who gathered unique and rare items.

The Libra Festival was closely related to all sorts of production players.

"Putting that aside, everything going well?"

"Nope, I have no clue. I can't do anything about the lack of manpower."

Charasin gestured behind him with an annoyed face.

There was an assortment of items stuffed into wooden boxes. There were dozens of boxes and the stuff was piled up to the ceiling. These were all sample items for the participants of the Libra Festival.

Charasin wanted to screen out any dangerous items by asking for samples, but it ended in failure. The participants submitted tons of diverse samples impossible for Charasin to screen through... Even 10 people might not be able to do it in time.

"Ahah, looks like..."

"Impossible right?"

"Impossible."

Charasin and Michitaka nodded in agreement.

The burden was too heavy.

"Seems like this idea has to be scrapped. Can we leave it alone?"

"Guess that will have to do. Heavens, tomorrow will be hell on earth."

The brooding Charasin replied cheerfully. It had reached such a level at this point of time, and this level was a sign of things to come. The Libra Festival was expanding in a scale further than Charasin and Michitaka could ever imagine.

Charasin and Michitaka could feel this obvious atmosphere.

The guild masters of the Round Table Council should be feeling it to some extent. But the rate of growth was faster than anyone could expect.

Charasin who was at the heart of the Libra Festival... Production Guild Liaison Committee office, felt a sense of danger the night before the festival.

But at this point of time, even Charasin was unable to detect the malicious intent bearing concrete goals.

Part 4

Shiroe's battle record should be very impressive to others.

For instance, he provided tactical insight to a group of players that did not form a guild, the Debauchery Tea Party, to be the fastest in the Japanese server to complete the raid 'Fields of Dead Spirits'. For players who were in the know, this record was highly regarded.

In famous raids like 'Rhadamanthys' Throne' or 'The Nine Great Prisons of the Heilos', being the first to complete a raid with their small organization made the Debauchery Tea Party a legend in a way.

Also, well informed people knew that the series of events that led to the formation of the Round Table Council must be credited to Shiroe's effort. His actions during crucial moments of large scale battles made the battle record of tactician Shiroe even more splendid.

But that was what outsiders saw. For Shiroe himself, this was just a part of countless battles. Shiroe had experienced battles that were small in scale and pointless to recce in advance. If you included all these battles as well, he didn't think his success rate was very high.

Shiroe didn't think highly of his tactician abilities.

(My success rate will probably drop today too.)

Shiroe had been feeling uneasy while trying to avoid attracting any attention.

"Please don't daze off my lord."

"That's right Shiroe-san, it will be a pity since you are so handsome."

"Eh..."

"Hmmm. Should be... Very handsome right?"

"My lord is my lord, it doesn't matter if he is handsome."

But the reality was cruel.

The two young girls on both sides wouldn't allow Shiroe to maintain a low profile.

On his right was a bright and cheerful young girl with a slender body that was acting her age. She was Minori, a Kannagi in Log Horizon.

She looked more feminine today, wearing a long denim skirt, white blouse, and an apricot pink cardigan. She gave the image of a daughter from a rich family, very suitable for Minori who liked to take care of

people. Her black hair that turned dark brown in the sunlight was tied with a black lace ribbon which also looked cute.

Sitting to his left was an old friend of Shiroe. A self proclaimed ninja with an uncanny sense of loyalty, Akatsuki. Akatsuki let her black hair, which looked even more lustrous today, down behind her back, but gazed at Shiroe in her usual serious manner.

Her dress was different from her usual pure black color. She was wearing a light purple kimono complemented by a blue hakama on the bottom. The young cat-like beauty Akatsuki suited this school-girl style dress exceedingly well.

If you asked 100 people, all of them would agree that Akatsuki was a beautiful young girl; Minori was also a girl that made you bright and happy like a daughter. This was a double blessing.

But Shiroe sandwiched in between looked troubled.

He was unable to explain what happened or point out a clear reason, but he felt as though he was sitting on pins and needles.

This was the center of Akiba, a cafe set up on a major junction. Shiroe was sitting here by the invitation of these 2 girls.

Shiroe was guided by his cautious nature to find out more about this cake eating contest in advance. There would be several rounds of preliminaries, so he could participate with Akatsuki and Minori separately by entering at different times.

But Shiroe was not interested in challenging this free contest twice. Even if this was a festival, this action would be akin to a kid who ate all the food in the sampling area correct? Shiroe came up with a plan while holding this thought in mind.

Since Akatsuki and Minori both liked cake, it would be fine if all 3 of them participated together. The rule was 8 pices for 2 people, so the 3 of them should be fine with 12 pieces.

Fortunately the Round Table Council had met with the guild hosting this cake contest, Danceteria, several times before. He remembered she was on good terms with Henrietta and had the temperament of an artisan.

The guild master Kanako welcomed Shiroe warmly when he went to apply. The reason she was receiving him with a smile was because Shiroe was a member of the Round Table Council, that made things easier so Shiroe made his request directly.

'There are 2 girls in my guild who want to join with me, can we change the challenge to 12?' Something like this. Kanako was surprised at the beginning and asked for the details with squinted eyes. It was not something he should spread around, but there was no point in hiding it at this point. Shiroe thought Log Horizon was a very open guild.

After explaining himself, the kind guild master agreed to the 3 of them entering the contest. But her smile seemed to hold some hidden intention that made Shiroe think something was not right. But since he got his

way, he could ignore such doubts. And thus Shiroe obtained the permission to participate in the cake eating contest as a trio.

And so the 3 of them waited for the cakes to be served in the open-air cafe, but Shiroe was feeling a slight tummy ache since morning.

He hadn't eaten anything yet, so this was not caused by the cakes.

Minori and Akatsuki usually got along well, but there was some tension in the air around them. This should be one of the reasons.

'We can eat this together, so don't worry!' When Shiroe reported via telepathy, leaving Minori aside, Akatsuki responded in a weird tone. Shiroe thought it had something to do with shinobi loyalty, but he was not sure of the actual reason.

On the other hand, Minori was all revved up. She had been chatting cheerfully with Shiroe from the start, but her overly passionate and positive attitude surprised Shiroe. Minori who was always so hardworking was looking towards the cake so much just like a middle school girl and Shiroe thought this was very cute.

But Akatsuki was fidgeting with her hakama and peeking at Shiroe occasionally. She took out kunai and other throwing weapons out of nowhere from time to time, so Shiroe had to keep an eye on her all the time.

There were 20 couples seated around them chatting peacefully with smiles on their faces.

The breeze got colder in the evening of October, the open-air cafe looked so peaceful under the orange street lights. There was a Bard somewhere performing a pop song that was a bit old, the music came with the wind and the nostalgic melody filled their ears.

Almost all the couples seated around were lovers, Shiroe thought absentmindedly.

It had been 5 months since the Catastrophe. This was an alternate world, there was enough time for 2 strangers to meet and fall in love.

One side of Shiroe's mind played the straight man and said: "Hey hey hey, this has been a hectic 5 months, it is impossible to find the time in this time of crisis!" but the opposition said: "No no no, it is because this is an exciting and fantastic world, this is why the fire of love is burning bright in young couples, right?"

Shiroe never had a girlfriend before or had been in a relationship.

So he was unable to judge whether 'this situation is being in love', but on the bright side, it was none of his business. Since they were happy, there was no need to go too deeply into it. Shiroe made this conclusion.

Couples were an existence that made you smile and Shiroe didn't hate them. He didn't like to talk about

love experiences or giving love consultations, but watching them from a distance gave him a warm feeling in his heart. That was why Shiroe was looking at them distractedly.

"My lord, my lord!"

"Ah, eh, sorry. What is it Akatsuki?"

Shiroe turned to look at Akatsuki who was much more restless than usual. She told him: "Your blank expression is not presentable."

Minori also chipped in: "Absolutely right, you need to go all out!" Shiroe thought it was weird to go all-out in a cake-eating contest, but he swallowed his words when he looked at Minori's serious face.

Seemed like Minori was all fired up.

Her pose of clenching her fists in front of her chest was cute, like a certain comedy character. She said 'Let's do our best!' Her pretty face and serious expression made her look more like she's acting mature than actually trying to be an adult. Instead of being encouraged, Shiroe felt a warmth in his heart.

It's a mystery.

"That..."

"Ehh."

"Akatsuki-senpai's kimono is so pretty."

Minori said these words as Shiroe was thinking of what to say. She probably didn't meant to aid him, but she was a great help for coming up with this conversation topic.

"It is very pretty. It's rare to see you in a kimono Akatsuki, did something good happen?"

"It doesn't suit me?"

Akatsuki seemed troubled and was putting on a brave face at the same time, causing both Minori and Shiroe to say 'No such thing'. The kimono was light-purple adorned with bell flowers giving it a mature design, and fit the petite Akatsuki so well it must be tailor-made. She was usually an enigmatic beautiful young girl like some small animal, she looked more stunning dressed in a kimono.

"Akatsuki-senpai looks good in a kimono."

"This is like a gra..."

"The word graduation ceremony is banned."[\[6\]](#)

"Eh..."

Akatsuki struck preemptively, leaving Shiroe speechless. Akatsuki glared at Shiroe and whispered 'I will

use my knee even if it is my lord.' But after Minori and Shiroe repeatedly complimented her saying 'it really suits you well', Akatsuki regained her calm mood and forgave Shiroe.

"Minori also looks good in this dress."

The middle-school girl blushed and smiled at Shiroe's compliment.

This get up seemed to be matched by Isuzu. Including where she bought the blouse and cardigan, how much she spent and the advice Isuzu gave, Minori explained in detail happily. Akatsuki who was tense all the while was also getting interested and listened to her while holding Shiroe's sleeve.

Shiroe finally loosened up a bit at this scene.

(If women are involved, all preparations and tactics are unreliable.)

It was the same during his time in the Debauchery Tea Party. For instance with Nazuna or Saki, any incident related to female Adventurers didn't end well no matter how much homework or planning you did in advance.

But if it didn't cause too much commotion, the problem would resolve itself like nothing ever happened. This was an incomprehensible and unavoidable result from a tactician's view.

(But 'she' was different.)

Shiroe recollected.

'She' was the founder of the Debauchery Tea Party, sort of like the guild master. Because the Debauchery Tea Party was a gathering of free players and took care of themselves, it was not a guild and 'she' was not an official guild master.

As Nyanta said 'Everyone knows what to do to build a comfortable home', so in a sense there was no need for a guild master.

She was the unofficial leader because she was the most willful person in the Debauchery Tea Party. In a sense, the Debauchery Tea Party was dragged all over the place by her.

(This lady can say something stunning with a straight face such as wanting to see the midnight sun in Iceland...)

'Her' willfulness was at the international level, causing Shiroe's battle record to worsen. The result didn't flatten out or end up with nothing conclusive, they usually ended up dead or on the edge of death. She once led a volunteer group on an overseas server expedition, but lost a key item preventing them from entering the Aurora zone, a really exhausting experience. This was the start of Shiroe's life of hardships.

In contrast, Akatsuki's and Minori's request was much cuter. He could fulfill their wishes if things went well. Shiroe thought.

Part 5

"Wah, it looks so delicious!"

The cakes were being served in front of Minori's wide eyes. They hadn't reached Shiroe's table yet, but cute strawberry shortcakes had been placed on several tables, the strawberries were bright and pretty.

The members of Danceteria humbly apologized their work was not up to the standard of the dessert shops from the original world, but it didn't feel this way at all. Both the appearance and the fragrance piqued their appetite.

"My lord my lord, I am looking forward to it."

"So pretty, I am so excited!"

Shiroe who was stuck between the young girls was starting to feel a bit better. This might be a hectic day, but he should be able to eat 4 slices easily if they were this size. It should be the same for Minori and Akatsuki, the 3 of them had no doubt they could finish easily.

The waitress served the cake to the tables, placing a variety of cakes before each couple. It was finally time for Shiroe's table, the guild master personally delivered the cakes on a silver tray with a big smile.

On the platter were 12 whole cakes. Strawberry, apricot, chocolate, cheese, yogurt, black current, apple pie, and chestnut that was a little early for the season.

12 cakes.

It was not in slices but whole cakes.

"?"

Minori made a surprised face while Akatsuki's expression was starting to cramp up.

"This is..."

Shiroe asked with his gaze, the guild master of Danceteria replied with a big smile.

"This is special service from our guild."

"Wait, this is a bit much..."

"This is our hearty service."

The guild master pushed down the doubts with her smile as she carefully placed the cakes on the table. The first one was an apple pie. A People of the Land waitress said 'Let me cut this into portions' and

started to slice it. The round pie was divided into 8 familiar triangle pieces, the perfect sizing size.

The small table in the cafe couldn't hold all these cakes, a dining trolley has been set up beside the table to hold the other cakes. 8 of them were the same as the other contestants, but the other 4 were specially made for them decorated with a candy figurines of a male between 2 females.

"Shiroe-san..."

"My lord..."

The 2 young girls looked at the slices of apple pie with a cramped expression. The apple pie looked tasty and Shiroe was confident of eating 4 of them. If the girls acted like normal girls and shouted 'I can't eat anymore', Shiroe was mentally prepared to eat one for each of them, a total of 6 slices.

Shiroe knew from experience women who claimed to have a small appetite were lying, but 'she' had educated him strictly that he had an obligation to take it like a man.

But his limit was 5 or 6 slices. But being served the whole cake meant 8 times the amount. And the stunning number of cakes before him was a psychological attack far worse than mere numbers.

"Anyway, let's start with 1 slice?"

Shiroe had no other intention other than to buy time when he said this, and the 3 of them started to eat the apple pie. Delicious. The large amount of apples used gave it a refreshing sweetness, the faint taste of cinnamon soothed both mind and body. He finished one slice unceremoniously as he immersed in the moistness and tenderness of the apples.

(I might be able to finish this...) As Shiroe was holding this sweet optimism, the rest of the apple pie appeared right in front of him.

Akatsuki placed it there.

"Why?"

"This is my lord's portion."

"You said portion, but this is the whole thing!"

"Ah, I am sorry, I will cut it into slices!"

That's not the point. When Shiroe was stopping Akatsuki, Minori had already stood up and was slicing the cake deftly with a knife. As Minori cut with a serious expression, her hair with a black ribbon shook near Shiroe's ears giving off a nice aroma.

(Ah ah, middle-school students are also girls...) As Shiroe thought about this, murmurs of 'Kill yourself', 'Unforgivable lolicon', 'Die', 'Break your glasses' could be heard from all over the cafe.

Akatsuki looked stunned. Shiroe shifted his gaze to her side and saw the cakes were decorated with

twisted words that seemed to be written with the left hand. 'How sly to bring 2 girls', 'Die lolicon ♥', 'Two-timer' and other such words were on the cakes.

(Ah...)

Shiroe finally understood the situation he was in.

Minefield.

The moment he understood, this phrase flashed across his mind. The 3 of them were in a minefield set up by outsiders called 'misunderstanding'. Shiroe's reputation was already bad, but he didn't want his 2 precious guild mates to be discriminated against too.

(No good, this might affect the 2 of them. It is a shame to call me a tactician like this... We need to stay low profile, quiet, and keep the damage to a minimum. Retreat from the cafe and reorganize...)

Shiroe's mind was running at high speed trying to search of ways to remedy the situation.

He didn't know how bad the misunderstanding was, how it came about and what was their current status. In this state, even if he grasped the situation he wouldn't be able to control it. Shiroe was unable to use his 'Full Control Encounter' because of this. Akatsuki placed her fork in front of him.

"My lord, here."

On the fork was a cute bite-size portion of apple pie.

"For me?"

Akatsuki nodded. Shiroe almost burst out 'You want to push the rest to me right!'. But under the stare of Akatsuki's black eyes, he was unable to speak. Usually, Akatsuki didn't dress up, but she was wearing a bell flower hair ornament today, making it even harder for Shiroe to talk.

Shiroe pouted to restrain his awkward mood. Akatsuki tilted her head with a perplexed face as her right hand with the fork moved closer.

"Please eat, my lord."

Akatsuki fed him food this way, but it was a big problem for Shiroe.

Feeding someone with a fork was what was known in the world as 'Ah... nh' action. He could tell from Akatsuki's serious face that she was doing this with malicious intent, but the outsiders wouldn't be able to tell.

If this went on, he would gain the reputation of a lolicon.

If he stepped on this mine, not only would his leg be broken, his lower body would be blown away. The stares from the surroundings were stabbing at him painfully. This was an open-air cafe and the highlight of the 1st day of the festival, even the pedestrians would glance here from time to time.

"Quick, or it will drop."

But this piece of pie had been forced in front of him, Shiroe could only accept it. The giggles that erupted in the background and the pointing fingers of the crowd appeared in Shiroe's mind. He just wanted to find a hole and hide inside.

"Shiroe-san!"

He turned around to see Minori with sparkling eyes also feeding him a piece of golden apple pie. Facing the pure and anticipating eyes of a girl 9 years his junior, even Shiroe didn't have the heart to turn her down.

(Aren't they a bit too dense for failing to read the situation? Now is the time to retreat, this is becoming a public execution right?)

"Is it good?"

"It's delicious right, my lord?"

"Hold on, it is tasty... But now is not the time to discuss this."

Shiroe tried replying this way, but the other couples around him were repeatedly doing the 'Ah... nh' action. Shiroe already had a faint feeling about this, but he was devastated when he saw the truth.

Seemed like love was in the air of Akiba, more than he imagined.

The clear sounds of laughter was not directed at Shiroe, but the loving whispers of infatuated couples. There was still room to redeem himself if he explained it this way... Shiroe consoled himself, but this didn't resolve the issue.

Reality was moving forward with the accumulation of each tiny step. It was symbolized by the cakes piled high in front of him.

Part 6

Reality was not something you could overcome just because you had the courage to challenge it. This was shown by the failure of Shiroe's table in the contest. There was still a chance if the trio took on 12 slices of cake. But 12 whole cakes was outrageous, it couldn't be done unless your stomach was a Bag of Holding.

The 3 of them did their best, but their limit was 18 pieces, 2 cakes and a quarter. Shiroe ate 9 of them, and he was feeling so bad he didn't want to move.

The 3 who lost in the all-you-can-eat battle headed back to their guild house depressed. It was not free since they did not finish, so Shiroe had to pay for all 12 cakes.

The time was about 8pm.

Shiroe was resting on the 3rd floor balcony of their guild house. To be precise, his tummy was so full he didn't want to move.

He planned to kill time by strolling around the festival after the contest, but setting Minori and Akatsuki aside, Shiroe felt like the weight of the cakes was pressing directly on his organs. Shiroe was tired and not in any condition to walk around, so he could only return to the guild house.

According to the message on the dining hall blackboard, Nyanta and Naotsugu went sightseeing in the festival, Isuzu and Rundelhaus wrote 'Walking the dog', they must be out on a date.

Shiroe took a glimpse at the board and walked to the balcony to rest on the cedar wood bench.

It could also be described as sinking.

The world would keep spinning at its own pace, it had been an unlucky day for Shiroe.

(This is why doing my homework in advance is useless.)

Now that he thought about it, that was why the Danceteria guild master was smiling so mysteriously. She had planned to attack with the whole cakes from the start. Shiroe did show up with 2 girls, but they were not in this sort of relationship, so there was no need for this level of jealousy.

(How did they calculate 12 whole cakes for the 3 of us... Ah, that's right.)

Shiroe had an inspiration and opened his telepathy, he was going to recommend the cake contest to Soujirou. The open-air cafe would also be running the free cake contest tomorrow, so Soujirou with his harem constitution would be able to enjoy it to the fullest.

Soujirou on the other end of the call seemed to be participating in the festival with his guild members to kill time. Shiroe could hear the faint female voices when conversing with Soujirou, but he couldn't make

out what they were saying. Shiroe was used to it, but Soujirou was surrounded by ladies right now.

Soujirou thanked Shiroe repeatedly for his recommendation. Shiroe didn't feel any guilt despite Soujirou's straightforward attitude. Shiroe who brought 2 members to the contest out of kindness was mistaken for being a two-timer and was bombarded with cakes. So a real harem should receive the appropriate treatment they deserved, Shiroe convinced himself that way.

Shiroe ended the call and felt better having vented some of his frustration. He leaned on the back of the bench relaxing his whole body and looked up at the night sky.

The unique feature of Log Horizon's guild house was the tree that punched through the floors and through the ceilings. The ancient tree spread its branches over the whole building covering Shiroe's living space in its shade.

It was the same for the balcony Shiroe was resting in, the branches swayed gently in the wind like an extension of the roof.

It was probably because of the festival, the streets had more lights than usual. The sun had set, but the orange glow from the shop lamps and the streetlights shone on the pavement full of moss and the branches decorated with ribbons, creating a fantastic atmosphere.

Log Horizon's guild house was modest in its decoration, but they still hung up some green banners and orange ribbons as ornaments. This was probably Minori and Tohya's style of making the place more festive.

(I have been neglecting my own guild recently...)

Shiroe thought about this after ending the call with Soujirou.

Usually, the most important duty of a guild master was running the guild itself. Being on top of things, providing assistance to members doing activities, planning and leading teams in operations, these were all part of managing a guild.

But Log Horizon was different from other guilds.

First was their numbers. Log Horizon had 8 people, Elder Tales' standard party size was 6, so they needed to leave 2 behind if they wanted to form a team.

Also, the level gap between the Log Horizon members was big, and divided into 2 groups. Shiroe, Naotsugu, Nyanta, and Akatsuki were the senior level 90 team. Minori, Tohya, Rundelhaus, and Isuzu were the junior party around level 40.

It was hard to form a party with their level difference.

For normal guilds, they would divide themselves by level and operate separately, this was the natural course of action.

But Log Horizon was full of veterans who liked to take care of others. Thankfully, Naotsugu and the

others didn't mind using the mentoring system to match the junior party and fill up the party roster.

From the perspective of training, they were a talented bunch.

Nyanta was the ideal adult that was humorous and patient when guiding the low level players. Protecting the low level players during their adventures was the duty a guild master should take the lead in, but Nyanta had done it on his behalf splendidly and was enjoying himself as well.

Naotsugu was also very suitable. He was not as refined as Nyanta, suitable for leading a bigger group. When Crescent Moon Alliance brought their beginners along to form 3 party expeditions, Naotsugu was the most popular mentor for the other guild.

It was the same with Akatsuki, she was shy and not good with words, but she didn't think of leading the beginners for training as a difficult chore. When the beginners hunted monsters and returned triumphantly, they would not see Akatsuki the entire time. But Akatsuki was protecting them from the dark, stopping high-level monsters from ambushing them... She was enjoying leading the party in her own way.

While other guilds needed the guild master to lead and plan the tasks and operations of the group, Log Horizon members were able to do so in lieu of their guild master. That was why Shiroe could deal with his Round Table Council work.

Leaving the duties of guild master to others was harmless in terms of daily operations, but it would affect the personal connections among guild members.

Shiroe was the high-level member who spent the least amount of time with the junior group. For example, he would make time to eat dinner with everyone in the guild house to improve relations, but Shiroe could feel the questioning looks from Rundelhaus and Isuzu that said 'Is our guild master a lazy bum who stays indoors all day?', and thought this needed to change.

(In terms of the prestige of a guild master, I am not as good as Naotsugu or Chief Nyanta... Even Soujirou is in control of his harem... correction, his guild's operation.)

Shiroe felt a bit down. He did not think it was possible to live up to everyone's expectations in performing his duties, even though this was the result of everyone pitching in to help, but he still felt the need to spend more time with his Log Horizon guild mates.

Shiroe thought this was the reason why Akatsuki and Minori forced him to participate in this activity.

(This festival might be a good chance. For the Round Table Council... I can't leave it alone, but I should take a break from it at a good stopping point. I need to make more time to spend with everyone.)

"My lord."

"!"

Shiroe who was thinking about all this jumped at Akatsuki's voice from close range.

"What is it Akatsuki?"

"Nothing, it's just that..."

Akatsuki was still wearing her glamorous clothes as she sat down quietly beside Shiroe. The gentle breeze of October brushed across their faces gently, bringing with it the leisurely sound of string instruments from the city.

"I can hear music"

"Ah ah, hmmm... should be the '7th Marching Band', they have a performance tonight."

"Is that so."

The petite Akatsuki sat on the bench and stretched her legs. Her legs hung in the air even when sitting on this low bench. Her toes could be seen from the opening of her deep blue hakama as she swayed her feet slightly. Shiroe asked.

"It's somewhat quiet here."

"I am always quiet."

"That is true."

In this world without electric speakers, the volume of the sound was dependent on the performers. The music that came with the wind had the hint of a lively atmosphere, but it seemed so blurry and far away.

Shiroe glanced at Akatsuki.

In the chilly wind that gently touched her face, Akatsuki stared into the distance as usual with an expression Shiroe could not see through.

"My lord."

"Hmmm?"

"My lord, that..."

"Hmmm."

Shiroe replied carefully to Akatsuki's every word. His petite friend might be silent but she worried about various things. Shiroe understood her nature, so he didn't rush her.

"Does my lord dislike cakes?"

"..."

Dislike cakes? It sounded like 'You can't finish them because you dislike cake?', but Shiroe was not sure how to respond as well. Shiroe ate 9 slices, which he thought was a commendable effort, did he misunderstand her?

"Still unhappy?"

"No way. Forget about that, I'm sorry. I recall it was the finals? We didn't make it there."

"That is fine, I am not interested, Minori is."

"Is that so."

Shiroe was not sure why Minori was interested in an eating contest, but he felt that she took the initiative to invite him because it was necessary. Minori was 14, but she was a responsible and thoughtful young girl.

"But..."

"Hmmm?"

"Are you fine with just this amount of cake?"

Akatsuki turned and faced Shiroe, looking straight into his eyes. The dark eyes on Akatsuki's petite face that left a deep impression were watery but had no warmth. Being stared at by a beautiful young girl like her was pressurizing.

"Ah?"

"Nothing really, just that you worked hard for the cake eating contest right? Are you fine with just 3-4 slices?"

"I... I didn't enter the contest for the cakes."

"Is that so?"

"..."

"The conversation dries up whenever I am with my lord."

"Even if you say that... But Akatsuki, you don't talk much right?"

Akatsuki was not a chatty person.

Sometimes they ran out of things to say. Shiroe felt awkward about this in the beginning and would try to talk about things, but he was now fine with the silent Akatsuki. Whenever Shiroe was handling administrative work, Akatsuki would erase her presence and stay in his room under the pretext of being his bodyguard. Shiroe was teasing Akatsuki because her tone was so cute, but the 2 of them only started bickering like this recently.

"That isn't true, I have lots of conversation topics."

"Then please provide one."

"Hmmm?"

"Provide a topic for us to talk about."

Akatsuki pouted in silence.

Her eyes shifted from side to side hesitantly.

She must be at a loss. As Shiroe was thinking that it was a mistake, the hesitant Akatsuki spoke:

"I am happy with staying this way."

Akatsuki's mouth was trembling in a weird shape as her white and slender fingertips touched Shiroe's forehead.

"You are happy with staying like this?"

Akatsuki nodded.

(Is this part of Akatsuki's shinobi-lord role play... I think I'm misunderstanding something. Wrong, I wouldn't know since I don't watch period dramas.)

"Is that so."

A gust of wind shook the branches in the night with a sound akin to the rides.

The wind mixed with the silence in the green lusher. Shiroe raised his head and looked at Akatsuki repeatedly poke at his head. Akatsuki pouted and focused on stroking his forehead. Shiroe didn't understand the joy in this, but happiness was subjective, so he felt there was no point in asking.

"Are you fine with staying this way?"

"This is an important duty to my lord."

"Is that so?"

Shiroe had spent a long time with Akatsuki now.

The chaos after the Catastrophe; many fights and battles; founding of the Round Table Council; the political drama in the ancient palace; conversation with Ri Gan; the battle of Choushi, and Rundelhou's revival.

Akatsuki had experienced all this by Shiroe's side without complaints. Shiroe thought he only made it through these fights because of Akatsuki's support.

Shiroe recalled all this as he continued to suffer the cute torture of the beautiful young girl in a kimono.

Part 7

Unable to breathe.

The night air seemed to solidify in her chest while her blood seemed to flow like mud noisily near her ears.

'... I am happy with staying this way.'

'... You are happy with staying like this?'

The gentle conversation lingered in her heart.

The young girl with black hair desperately hid her embarrassment as she said tender words of love. The voice of the guild master seemed puzzled but was still very gentle.

Minori's knees seemed to be disappearing like bubbles, as she endured these feelings on her way to the kitchen. She was holding dandelion barley tea on a tray in her hands. She wanted to bring it to the balcony for Shiroe, but she was now walking subconsciously.

She could not stay there. She could not look at that scene.

Thousand of noises seemed to be sounding out in her head, everything seemed so confusing to her. She seemed to be driven by her ethics and had used up all her strength just leaving the scene.

The first was the sense of impact, the next was crushing confusion... Even though there were no concrete problems, her heart was full of questions. She wanted to ask, but didn't know who or what to ask.

Her confused emotions and her desire to seek help filled her chest. It moved slowly to her abdomen evolving into a heavy and uncomfortable feeling.

Minori returned to the kitchen subconsciously, placed the tray on the table, and sat down on a chair. She didn't understand why she was so upset.

But she saw something between Shiroe and Akatsuki just now on the balcony of the 3rd floor. She could see the special feelings Akatsuki had for Shiroe on her face.

It was not visible from her actions but it was obvious. When Minori noticed the love her senpai bore, it felt like she touched an open flame accidentally and shrank back from the shock.

This shock made her run away to this refuge.

It was like a sandstorm went through her mind, blowing her thoughts into a mess and she was unable to construct any specific questions as she sat.

Minori looked at the surface of the table not knowing what to do.

After a long while, the first thing that came to her mind was 'Akatsuki is in love with Shiroe'.

(That's right, Akatsuki-san likes Shiroe-san.)

This was a simple truth.

Today was a sunny day.

After summer came autumn.

The guild house was shrouded in greenery.

Just like these things, it was clear, without doubt, a natural fact.

Even if it were obvious, when she thought about it in her heart, the shock she felt just now returned, its noise nearly obscuring her awareness. The facts constructed from these few short sentences broke down into words and were chopped into pieces becoming a total mess. If you lost focus for a moment, the thoughts and their meaning would fall apart.

Minori picked up the pieces of thoughts scattered on the floor and molded it into a ball as she took several deep breaths.

From her chest to her abdomen, there was a feeling of discomfort, she found it hard to breathe. She felt as though she had hypothermia, even her heart felt like it was being squeezed.

In this anxious mood where she had difficulty breathing and felt as though her chest was slowly being pierced from the back, Minori finally faced another truth.

(I also... like Shiroe-san.)

The first time she acknowledged her feelings, it did not have the faint fragrance of lemons.

It had the taste of burning metal just like her gloom and depression from the start.

All of Minori's joints seemed to loosen as she trembled as if her bones were going to fly off as she faced these unbearable emotions. The last time she felt this crippling sense of helplessness was the night Tohya spent in the hospital's intensive care unit.

She just sat down, but she felt like running and crying, it was so uncomfortable restraining this impulse of hers. Growing up with her twin brother and aiding him with his physical disabilities, Minori knew she was calm, mature, and had a strong sense of responsibility.

But she didn't know about these strong feelings of hers that she couldn't hold back.

... like Shiroe-san.

Her heart was shredded into pieces just thinking like this. Being too fearless and not knowing her own limits. This was a pain caused by her fear of her own arrogance.

But the fact was that there was a sweet feeling hidden in this pain.

This sweetness was not the blissful feeling when imagining about being a couple with Shiroe.

It was the temptation of touching your wounds to feel the warmth of your flowing blood even though you knew it hurt. The temptation of the painful wound had a feeling of decadence and the sweet taste of the agony of her first love.

... Minori couldn't think of any reason why Shiroe will choose her, but she could come up with dozens and hundreds of reason why he wouldn't choose her.

So this sweetness was just an anesthetic for Minori.

The difference in age, difference in ability, difference in practical skills, difference in battle powers, her immaturity, unreliability, and lack of potential. She looked plain compared to Akatsuki... Minori was simply a common middle school girl you could find anywhere.

And for the first time, she realized the ugly side of herself.

When Akatsuki was touching Shiroe, a thought flashed in Minori's mind.

So crafty...

That place belongs to me.

This was not a reason, just a willful excuse. It was natural for Akatsuki to have the freedom to like someone.

Even so, Minori still thought this was 'so crafty' because somewhere in her heart she thought Shiroe belonged to her.

Shiroe who encouraged her when she was confined and suffering in the darkness of Hamelin; Shiroe who freed her from her slavery; Shiroe who she wanted to emulate and his back she was chasing after. Minori had determined Shiroe was 'mine' somewhere in her heart.

(I thought Shiroe-san was always going to be by my side... and be my teacher forever.)

This thinking was too arrogant.

The superficial nature of her ugliness made Minori feel as if her organs were full of mud. Like coal burning her from inside her skin, this agony made Minori feel like rolling on the floor. But crying and screaming would not ease the pain.

It was painful and annoying.

Minori was holding this feeling all this time, she felt dizzy just thinking about it.

Especially thinking of Shiroe as her own belonging, she wanted to kill that part of herself for thinking of something like this. Most importantly was her failure to notice and discard these feelings, Minori was disappointed at her arrogant subconscious self.

(I even thought that was crafty, I really... how...)

After a long while.

Minori endured this grinding psychological pain in the dark and kept breathing. The air was still sticky and heavy, as uncomfortable as breathing sand.

Minori didn't know how many hours passed as she faced the suffering in her heart.

"Minori?"

Tohya came with a 'Bug Light Lamp' and it illuminated the kitchen. Minori didn't notice until her twin was by her side, thinking it was an illusion as she gazed dimly at Tohya.

"What is it Minori, why are you making such a face?"

Tohya took a handkerchief from his bag and wiped Minori's face roughly. He pinched her nose with a handkerchief and shook it side to side. Minori realized she was crying when she heard the sound of her runny nose.

"Tohya..."

"What is it?"

"Tohya."

"Hmmm?"

Tohya sat on a chair beside Minori and loosened his belt strap. His armor and bag fell heavily to the floor. Tohya was the usual brother Minori was proud of. Even though he was acting indifferently, she could still feel his concern.

She just realized her arrogance a moment ago. Even though she had no right to bear this feeling, no matter how much she cautioned herself, she was unable to suppress this feeling of jealousy. The usual profile of her brother's face soothed this jealous emotion slightly.

"Tohya, that, I..."

"Yeah."

"I think... I like Shiroe-san."

"That's right."

"Ah?"

"That's right, you like him."

Tohya tied his armor with his belt and replied without facing Minori, as natural as talking about the weather.

"Eh? Eh eh? Why is your reaction like this?"

"Minori has always liked Shiroe-sensei, you just didn't realize it."

"Didn't realize?"

She didn't realize. She probably didn't. So she didn't realize... Minori's feeling changed gears 3 times and sank deeper. According to Tohya, this agony was also because she 'Didn't realize'. But even so, the feeling of chewing sand had alleviated a bit with Tohya by her side.

"It's so troubling."

"Why?"

Minori's words made Tohya look her way for the first time. He looked more mature than usual, shrouded in white light.

"You ask me why..."

"Don't you feel troubled Minori? It is not troubling, just painful right?"

Her heart jumped.

Those words stabbed into Minori's heart.

A feeling of being seen through.

Minori recalled Akatsuki extending her fingers gently.

She looked hesitant but unable to restrain herself as she touched Shiroe's forehead with her fingertips. This made Minori aware of her jealousy.

It was an incorrect way of thinking but she was unable to suppress it, as these ugly emotions kept on accumulating.

This bitterness and pain was unbearable.

But she could not leave it alone or throw it away. Minori realized her feelings for Shiroe for the first time through this pain, these feelings bloomed with a sweetness in her heart.

"Is it... okay?"

"You can't help it right?"

(I can't help it?) Minori wondered.

She was not searching for an excuse, she was attempting to find something useful in the abyss of darkness and pain. She was digging through the ugliness filled with mud, hunting for something that had not been corrupted.

Minori imitated Shiroe's action and took a deep breath while listening to sounds from far away.

(Shiroe-san...)

Minori recalled everything about Shiroe.

Shiroe's words and his eyes behind his round-frame glasses.

His cautious use of words when answering questions, how he looked when explaining things with a map.

His slightly troubled face while adjusting his glasses.

His pout when he was putting on a brave face. His pale profile when he set his mind on something.

His steely voice when he said 'Leave it to me'.

As Minori was tortured by confusion and pain, in the deserted plains of her mind, only these memories were bright and vivid.

In order to not lie to these memories, in order to not betray these memories. Minori was willing to give up all the other grey noise in exchange.

From the kitchen, Minori and Tohya could hear the buzz from the city in the distance akin to its breathing. After spending a long time in the swaying shine of the bug light lamp, Minori nodded her head.

"You are right, there are no troubling feelings, only pain. That is it... I did not lose anything or get anything wrong, or did anything at all... Yeah, I haven't accomplished anything right?"

For the first time she realized her feelings were like a pastel-colored candy.

In the darkness filled with crude signals and noise, the flames were spreading like bleeding blood, so sharp that it cut you when you touched. Minori was holding feelings that contrasted so strongly in her heart, but she still managed to squeeze a smile for her twin brother. The tears on her cheeks were still wet, but she didn't want to deny their existence.

Minori thought it was useless to hold on to these worries without doing anything to remedy them. She gave up on thinking it would not have an end if there was no beginning.

She was unable to repay Shiroe or catch up to him. The Minori like this would of course be suffering in pain.

Minori spent the long night accompanied by Tohya.

This was the first night of tempering a strong blade, but Minori knew very well that it was not the last.

CHAPTER.

THE SORCERER'S APPRENTICE

[魔法使いの弟子]

▶ NAME: SHIROE

▶ AGE: 23

▶ WEAPON: PRUDENCE

▶ SPECIALITY: MAKING PROPOSAL
WITH ONLY ONE CHOICE

▶ BIRTHDAY: NOVEMBER 23

▶ FAVORITE FOOD: SABA MISONI

▶ ITEM 1:

[PARKA JACKET]

A PARKA JACKET MADE OF COTTON FABRIC. THE PARKA RESEMBLES SHIROE'S REGULAR EVERYDAY WEAR IN THE REAL WORLD. ITS SOMEWHAT LARGE SIZE GIVES OFF A SLOVENLY FEEL.



▶ ITEM 2:

[RAINBOW GLASS INK BOTTLE]

A PRODUCTION-CLASS ITEM. THE COLOR OF INK WITHIN THE BOTTLE CAN BE CHANGED. A LIMITED PRODUCTION RARE ITEM BY THE PAINTER GUILD "ATELIER ARMADILLO" IN AKIBA. THE SMALL GUILD EXISTS DUE TO SHIROE'S ASSISTANCE.



▶ ITEM 3:

[LONG KOTATSU]

A FURNITURE TYPE ITEM WITH THE MAGICAL POWER TO ATTRACT INDOOR GATHERINGS. THIS LARGE SIX-SEATER IS MADE-TO-ORDER. RECENTLY, IT SEEMS TO BE USED REGULARLY BY THE PEOPLE OF THE LAND.



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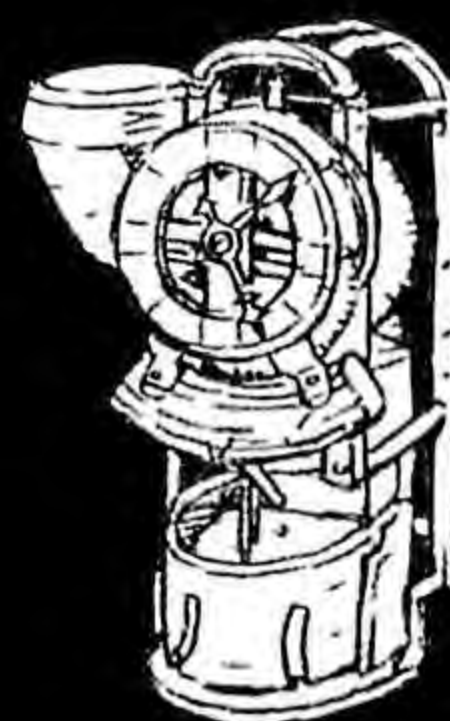
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〈WALL CLOCK〉

CONTROLS LIFE
WITH PRECISION.

Part 1

The chilly autumn air gave the sky a cool and refreshing feeling. Akiba's night sky was filled with twinkling stars as far as the eye could see.

The stars were brighter and more numerous in the world of Elder Tales than in the original world. Whether it was due to the clean air here or the game's aesthetic design, the nightscape of this alternate world was aglow with stars.

On this night of the Libra Festival, Akiba was still buzzing with activity late into the evening.

As Akiba was the primary city of Adventurers, its functions were extremely specialized. Said functions encompassed the portal system, banks, guild halls, cathedral, and the marketplace. When Elder Tales was still a game, Adventurers only needed these five facilities to survive. In other words, Akiba had no functions beyond these five. That was what it meant to be 'specialized.'

Before the Catastrophe, Akiba had lacked proper living quarters. While places such as taverns and inns could be found within the city, they were mostly included for decorative purposes, to give players the feeling of being in an alternate fantasy world — they were like stage props which were not truly usable.

But after the Catastrophe, Adventurers had set out to make the city truly livable. For this to be accomplished, a number of facilities were required just so they could remain within the city. The thriving restaurants were some of the earliest changes. After them, all sorts of stores, private shops, and services had opened as well.

While some of these enterprises were run by Adventurers, most were either jointly run by Adventurers and People of the Land or had been established by the People of the Land themselves.

There were several reasons for this, the biggest being the income gap. Compared to People of the Land, Adventurers were capable of earning more money in a shorter period of time. Just by grinding mobs, even a mid-level Adventurer could earn more in one day than a Person of the Land farmer could earn in a month.

Although the disparity in production ability was not as drastic as combat ability, it was still significant. In the eyes of Adventurers, even a Person of the Land hailed as a master of their craft would only be as skilled as an Adventurer with a level sixty subclass.

Of course, regardless of whether you were a Chef or a Tailor, as long as you reached level twenty, the product would be good enough for normal consumption. A Chef of this level was capable of making fresh-baked breads, delicious soups, crispy fries, as well as chicken fried to a perfect golden-brown. A Tailor of this level could make comfortable shirts, loose-fitting pants, coats dyed with bright colors, or leather vests.

People of the Land could also create these kinds of 'generic products'. As a result, it was only natural that Adventurers would focus on tasks that only Adventurers were capable of doing, leaving the more generic and mundane tasks to the People of the Land.

After these changes, Akiba was incomparable to its limited 'in-game version,' and now hosted a great multitude of shops and facilities. Naturally, the population of the People of the Land also multiplied, increasing in a geometric manner. This resulted in shops which were run exclusively by People of the Land opening up one after another.

There was another reason for the growth of the city's People of the Land population.

From the viewpoint of the Adventurers, this player city was just a stronghold for them. Nearly all the Adventurers simply viewed this place as a convenient staging ground, a point of departure. But this place held a different meaning to the People of the Land.

Adventurers were completely different beings compared to the People of the Land, having both superior combat abilities and immortal bodies. From the viewpoint of the People of the Land, this player city was the pioneer settlement for the Adventurers in this world.

Most of the People of the Land treated Adventurers with gratitude and respect. While the large number of Adventurers who dealt with the various wild beasts and monsters in the land of Yamato were considered a reliable military force in this world, their strength also created a strong sense of fear in the People of the Land. This fear was also directed towards the city which housed their revival mechanism, the cathedral. It was possible that they were more awed by this forbidding city than by the Adventurers themselves.

The original People of the Land who lived in Akiba were a special type, descended from ancestors who had lived in Akiba long ago. In a sense, they were like priests or priestesses who served gods in shrines. These special People of the Land performed various duties, such as being merchants and operating banks.

However, the age of such fear had ended.

The Adventurers used their frightening strength to defeat goblins, beastmen, and even various powerful monsters such as dragons, saving the People of the Land's lives numerous times. Meanwhile, Adventurers seemed to adhere to the temporary role of 'quest takers'. It was commonly thought that Adventurers could only form superficial relationships with People of the Land.

But recently, the Adventurers and the People of the Land had signed an agreement with each other.

The significance of the agreement signed between the League of Freedom Towns Eastal and the Round Table Council was definitely not small.

It signified the declaration of the Adventurers to the People of the Land, that Adventurers were not just 'friendly passersby' but 'a part of this world'. It also showed that the People of the Land accepted the Adventurers as such.

Raynesia was sent to Akiba as a symbol of this agreement.

Raynesia did not just represent the nobles, she was also a living example of a "People of the Land living

in the Adventurers' city" to the masses.

Because of this reason, the population of People of the Land in Akiba increased each day.

Originally, Akiba was a city strewn with the ruins of buildings. However, after the People of the Land were included into Akiba's society, even this streetscape started to change. The rubble was gradually cleared away, the spooky abandoned buildings were also cleaned up.

Nearly all the Adventurers living in Akiba were Japanese.

In both a good and a bad sense, when these meddlesome people noticed the People of the Land were busy clearing up the streets, they decided to help out since they were bored and had nothing better to do. While working together, they naturally started to converse, becoming familiar with each other.

In the current Akiba, the number of Adventurers who employed People of the Land increased greatly. Similarly, the number of People of the Land doing business with Adventurers increased more than tenfold.

— The "Linguine", a tavern run by People of the Land.

This establishment, which normally had few customers, was packed to the brim on the night of the first day of the Libra Festival.

"This is high quality tomato stew nya."

"It's delicious!"

Within this bustling establishment, two people were seated opposite each other at the innermost table of the restaurant. They were consultants from Log Horizon, Chief Nyanta to be exact, and the Crescent Moon Alliance novices' caretaker, Serara, who herself was a beginner.

The place was filled with customers to the point that it was nearly overflowing. Even though it was now October and the night air was chilly, the interior of the store felt stifling even without the use of heaters.

Over the course of the past few days, many People of the Land came to visit this city for the sake of the festival. All accommodations within the city had been fully booked, even the temporary ones specifically set up for the festival by the Round Table Council.

It was the same for restaurants, all of them were overflowing with customers. Small eateries within the alleys were filled with both Adventurers and People of the Land, toasting to the success of the upcoming celebrations which would officially start the next day.

The new cooking method publicized by the Round Table Council spread like wildfire throughout Yamato. Despite this, not many Adventurers or People of the Land could utilize it. Due to skill restrictions, less than ten percent of the population could be considered good at cooking. Using limited ingredients, these people came up with new dishes daily.

Adventurers tended to try recreating normal Japanese food. In contrast, the People of the Land, who had no prior experience, combed through their existing repertoire of recipes, creating dishes which struck

their fancy. Although the method of preparation could be relatively simple, some stores were extremely popular due to the rustic flavor of their dishes.

"Linguine" was one such place.

The dish known as Kanto-style Tomato-flavored Stew was the specialty of this store. Adding the fact that it was currently happy hour, the tavern was filled with a vulgar din. While it was rather inappropriate for young girls to visit this sort of place, Serara was extremely pleased that she was able to have a late dinner together with her favorite Nyanta. Even though the place was packed, the thought that their knees were nearly touching under the table made her both happy and flustered at the same time.

"Is Nyanta-san tired?"

"Not at all nyan."

Although Nyanta gave such a reply, it was as though he had a superhuman performance that day. Crescent Moon Alliance had set up several booths for the Libra Festival. It was not just for the returning Crescent Moon kiosk, their Tailors' sewing department would be selling clothes and providing fitting services, their Blacksmiths would also be selling weapons with personalized engravings.

Crescent Moon Alliance was just a small guild, the size of its departments was not more than five people. This time, Nyanta was acting as the assistant instructor for the fitting department.

"Have I... done well?"

"You did well, Serara-cchi."

"I can't wait for tomorrow!"

"That's right nya~"

Passing a busy day together with Nyanta in this manner, having to spend the whole day manning a booth come daybreak, Serara was filled with anticipation and happiness as she thought about these. Given the circumstances, it could be said that her anticipation came from "Being able to spend the whole day manning a booth", or more accurately, "Being able to spend the entire day with Nyanta".

Honestly speaking, Serara was able to sympathize with Isuzu when she decided to leave Crescent Moon Alliance. Serara adored Nyanta from the day she was rescued in Susukino. It would be a lie if she said she had not considered doing the same to be with Nyanta.

However, Serara was in charge of looking after the beginners in Crescent Moon Alliance. Unlike Isuzu who could start afresh after leaving Hamelin, Serara had comrades who relied on her.

Serara had already apologized to Nyanta, after declining his offer to join Log Horizon. She did not want this resolution of hers, which she treasured, to be viewed as a hollow statement.

At that time, Nyanta only smiled and commented "Serara-cchi is an amazing child nya." Nyanta the mature gentleman had always been a warm person, however, he became much warmer after that... even listening

attentively to everything Serara had to say. Hence Serara was extremely content despite her conflicting interests.

The delicious stewed tomatoes with seafood and vegetables were refreshing yet faintly sweet. Like the stew, the orange juice with added ice was very good. Chatting with Nyanta was also delightful. Serara embraced these happy feelings as she had her meal.

Suddenly, the sharp noise of something breaking was heard, silencing the clamor of the store for a moment. It seemed that a waitress had dropped a plate. The tavern's famous tomato stew was spilled onto the floor, dyeing the stone with red geometric patterns.

A white plate lay shattered on the floor. This was a relatively common occurrence in the restaurant. However, just as the clientele were about to resume their normal activity, they were interrupted by the sound of violence.

Serara looked up from the table in time to witness the waitress falling to the ground. A man was towering over her.

"Don't joke with me! How are you going to deal with this since it's been stained like this?"

The man roared indignantly.

Serara quickly checked their descriptions and noted that both of them were probably People of the Land since their job descriptions did not match any of the Adventurer classes. In addition, the young man wore expensive clothes. The man who seemed to be a noble chastened the waitress for her negligence in a disgruntled manner, remarking that a lowly waitress like her could not possibly afford to compensate him.

The silence within the establishment seemed to encourage the man. He began to criticize the tavern in a haughty manner, commenting on how small, dirty, and noisy the place was, how this establishment lacked taste. He scoffed at how it didn't live up to its reputation even after he had bothered to go there himself. He went on and on about the tavern's various shortcomings in a loud and garish manner.

Serara felt a sense of distaste.

She had been enjoying her meal.

The food here was delicious. While it was indeed rather noisy, this sort of ambiance was not a bad thing. In truth, did it not seem that everybody here enjoyed themselves? This place was simply the way it was. Whether you liked it or not, there was no reason to disturb the dining experience of other people, Serara thought to herself.

"Is this guy an idiot?"

Somebody whispered.

This man was mistaken. This place was not this man's—most likely a noble—usual eating place nor a restaurant exclusive to high society. Rather, it was an "alleyway restaurant" famous for its delicious pot of tomato stew.

He was also mistaken about another fact. The clientele was not speechless because they were intimidated by his status or authority. They were simply stunned by the sheer foolishness of his actions.

"Who is it! Who insulted me just now!"

In response to the man's shrill cries of indignation, three Adventurers rose from their seats. Feeling threatened, a Person of the Land warrior who looked like the man's guard also stood up. This sudden development caused the atmosphere within the establishment to be filled with tension.

"Nyanta-san..."

Serara cried out as she huddled in her seat.

It was not out of fear. Serara had taken part in the battle at Sand Leaf peninsula and had even been involved in its worst part, the defense of Choushi. She was a qualified Adventurer who had also fought against undead creatures and monsters. Hence, in terms of fighting, the level of danger at the present moment was not frightening to her. However, the tension resulting from people's conflicting emotions and the tension of the battlefield were two completely different things. Seeing her wish to get along with everybody being trampled upon in this manner, Serara felt as though she was being swallowed by an indescribable, oppressive atmosphere.

"No need to worry nya."

As Nyanta turned to leave, he grabbed the young nobleman by the scruff of his neck at the same time, in the same manner as how one would grab hold of a cat. The young man was stupefied at being held in this manner.

"Don't cause a commotion nya. This is a place for people to enjoy dining nya."

"Shut your mouth, commoner!"

"Yours truly is an Adventurer nya."

Nyanta's response caused the man to be at a loss for words. A flustered look appeared on his face. Indeed, even if the number of People of the Land had increased in the city, this was still Akiba where more than half the residents were Adventurers.

With great difficulty, the man made a neutral expression. He had probably forgotten this fact.

"This concerns you even less in that case!"

"Ooo~"

"This is a private matter amongst People of the Land. There are differences in social status among us People of the Land. Since this matter does not concern you Adventurers, please don't butt in. I have no wish to start a dispute with you people."

"Oh~ It doesn't seem that way to me."

"But you behaved in such an outrageous manner within this establishment which we frequent regularly eh?"

The three people who had come forward from the depths of the tavern were indeed Adventurers. One of them performed a healing spell on the young waitress.

The nobleman's guard appeared uneasy. He licked his lips nervously, looking around warily.

The disparity in strength between the two groups was evident just by glancing at their equipment. This would not have been the case if he was a member of the Knights of Izumo or a knight serving a lord or even another high-level Adventurer. However being a guard of such a trashy noble, he was only around level ten or so.

As far as Serara could tell, this particular guard was only good for decoration.

"Young master, it would probably be better if you..."

"This is Akiba nyan. Akiba has its own rules and regulations nya, don't cause a commotion here nya. "

Nyanta walked towards the entrance, interrupting the guard. At first, it seemed as though the young nobleman was going to throw a tantrum; however, the fact that the tall and slender Nyanta could effortlessly carry him with one hand despite looking middle-aged caused him to open and close his mouth wordlessly. When Nyanta reached the door, he swung the young man in front of him with ease.

"Don't worry about the bill nya! Consider it my treat this time nya. Since today's a celebration, it's better to enjoy yourself instead of going around starting fights nya."

The guard shouted "young master, young master" repeatedly in a panicked voice as Nyanta proceeded to throw the young nobleman out the door.

The city guard of Akiba would not react over this small an incident. It was common knowledge that as long as there were no weapons drawn or any physical injury inflicted, the guards would not treat it seriously.

"Nyanta-san..."

"Don't worry, don't worry, just continue to enjoy your meal nya~"

Serara sighed in relief after hearing these warm words from Nyanta.

Soon, the hustle and bustle of the tavern resumed as the tense atmosphere dissipated. The waitress went about issuing apologies to the other customers. Receiving replies such as "No need to worry" and "It couldn't be helped", the girl's face was flushed with embarrassment as she gave her thanks.

"That incident just now was certainly unexpected though."

"That's because the People of the Land have changed drastically nya. Furthermore, since today is a festival, this city will be filled with people who are unfamiliar with it nya."

Nyanta took a finely cut piece of bread and ate it in one large bite after dipping it in tomato sauce.

"The People of the Land seem to have an aristocratic society nya, they would probably be shocked after seeing how things are in Akiba nya."

(Why would they be shocked...) Serara was stumped.

Serara had almost never lived anywhere outside of Akiba. She had lived in Susukino for only a short period of time and was unfamiliar with its urban atmosphere, as she had spent her time hiding in Nyanta's residence. Therefore, she was completely ignorant of the culture and habits of People of the Land towns. Serara felt that it would be tragic if the discrimination and abuse she saw were common practices among their nobility.

However, People of the Land were a part of this world. They had the right to freely promote their own culture and lifestyle. Nyanta had mentioned this to Serara before. At that time she had not understood the true significance of those words.

"However, this city is ours nya. You need to follow its customs; good food should be eaten with a smile, the fun and entertainment of festivals should be enjoyed nya... When it looks as though conflict is inevitable, people just need to be careful and it should be fine nya."

Serara sighed in relief after Nyanta finished speaking, nodding her head in agreement.

While this festival was for Adventurers such as Serara, it was also the first time an activity had been organized with the People of the Land in mind. While situations such as the one before might arise in the future, there was no reason for them to turn back, this was a necessary transition. Serara came to this conclusion by herself.

The hustle and bustle resumed and the tavern recovered its warm ambiance once again. While this small storm might have left an impact on people, it did not dampen the hearts of the Adventurers. If such a small incident affected them, they would be unable to survive in this alternate world.

Akiba's Adventurers had faced many trials and tribulations over the past five months.

Hence, there shouldn't be any problems. Serara relaxed and smiled at Nyanta.

Part 2

On the same night, at a different location, a different pair was working, wallowing in dejection from the amount of work they had to finish.

They were the beautiful duo leading the Crescent Moon Alliance, Maryele and Henrietta. They were constantly giving instructions in preparation for the temporary shop's opening and fashion show the next day.

Crescent Moon Alliance presently had sixty five members. Although the Hamelin incident increased their numbers, it was still moderately-sized and definitely did not have the manpower to set up stands in the same manner as the three large-scale production guilds.

Then again, it was a little-known fact that this festival was the suggestion of the medium and small guilds.

New ideas did not just come from the large guilds. As long as an artisan with enough skill had inspiration, he or she could come up with all sorts of new products. This was the current Akiba. If such emergent products came from the large guilds, they would be publicized and spread by these large guilds. But if the artisan came from one of the smaller guilds, it would be harder to do the same.

Such points were given much consideration and formed the basis of this Libra Festival.

In other words, by attracting participants and customers in the name of the Libra Festival, not only the booths of the small and medium guilds, but even new products could get exposure and popularity from both Adventurer and People of the Land merchants.

Crescent Moon Alliance had been hoping for such an outcome when they registered their booths.

However, what was truly motivating them was plain and simple enthusiasm. Both Maryele and Henrietta worked long hours simply because they hoped to enjoy the cultural festival-like atmosphere. Even though that was the case, they were not going to totally neglect the issue of profits while having fun.

Currently in Akiba, the small and medium guilds had an opportunity to make a fortune. The small-scale guilds led by Crescent Moon Alliance were all looking forward to this.

Daybreak was just moments away.

The exhausted members of the Crescent Moon Alliance had probably collapsed around various parts of the guild hall. In the center of the room which the duo were in, there was a table big enough to play ping-pong on with wooden crates piled to its side. Due to the ample space of the new guild hall, it was possible to partition the workspace in such a manner.

After stuffing a shirt which had been dyed with plant dyes into a wooden crate, Maryele stretched and took a deep breath, then began talking with Henrietta.

"I say, shall we finish up?"

"Agreed."

At the other end of the table, Henrietta was examining a modest number of documents. After recording figures on the tally next to her, she attached them to crates.

"Let's end here."

After hearing these words, Maryele gave a long sigh.

The grand opening of the Libra Festival was scheduled for the next day.

In Akiba, there were two main roads which ran perpendicular to each other, dividing the city into four quarters. The liaison committee allowed stores to set up shop along these streets based on ballot results. Crescent Moon Alliance had managed to obtain one such store. It was a small booth located at the central junction where they planned to revive Crescent Moon. Returning after a long absence, Crescent Burgers would obviously be sold at a substantial discount this time around.

"At that time, the price was akin to robbery."

"It was robbery indeed."

The two who were exhausted from packing continued their dialogue with drained expressions.

Even though "the confident, beautiful and big breasted, Kansai-ben guild leader" Maryele and "the bespectacled, confident onee-sama who you wished would scold you" Henrietta were the pride of the Crescent Moon Alliance, they were lazing around the office as it was just the two of them. In this manner, they were indistinguishable from any other female Adventurer.

Henrietta felt as though she would doze off if they continued like this. She shook her partner by the shoulders shouting "Marie, pull yourself together." But Maryele was not a disciplined person by nature and even though she nodded repeatedly in acknowledgement, she was totally wasted.

Henrietta gave up and assisted Maryele onto the sofa. Maryele looked as though she had taken root there. "If you feel like sleeping, go sleep on your bed." However, she insisted on wanting to take a bath first, stretching Henrietta's patience to its limit.

"If you feel like bathing, why don't you go ahead and do so?"

"I'll rest a bit~ my HP is critical."

"Your HP bar is completely within the green safe zone. Even if it weren't, can't you just heal yourself?"

The bodies of Adventurers had excellent physical characteristics. Even for Henrietta who was a Bard, the exertion of packing for ten hours straight was no different from light exercise. She was still far from the point of collapse.

Even though Maryele said and looked like she was physically exhausted, Henrietta suspected that it was

just mental fatigue.

"Lemme rest a while!"

Henrietta gave a deep sigh at her shameless friend and sat beside her.

"Marie, what's the matter?"

"Nothing."

"Don't try to lie to me."

Henrietta shrugged. Maryele was too cute, so she lost the motivation to make a witty comeback.

She could roughly guess the reason why Maryele was being so troublesome.

It probably had something to do with a certain topic of entertainment which had come up repeatedly over the past month.

Henrietta accessed the in-game menu and cursor mentally.

"— Yes, it's me. Yes, that's correct... No, sorry for troubling you since it's already this late. Hence it's been like this ever since, that's right."

Henrietta seemed to be talking to the empty air after calling someone through telepathy. As she was receiving the other party's voice directly in her ear, it looked as though she was talking to herself. Regardless of that, this form of magical communication could be used to communicate with faraway friends.

Maryele was aware of this fact, so she was not worried about her friend's mental health. Instead, a look of seriousness replaced her absentminded expression and she began to panic.

"Henrietta? Who is it? Who are you talking to?"

"Ahahaha. Indeed, indeed, it's as you say, I can't stand it, lazy to the point of being insufferable. Marie is acting in a troublesome manner again and it's really cute--when she does that she even jiggles her breasts!"

"Who is it! Who are you talking tooo~!"

"Marie, I'm talking using telepathy, can you quiet down a bit?"

"You're obviously talking about me, how do you expect me to be quiet!"

Maryele grabbed the smirking Henrietta by her shoulders and shook her. However, Henrietta was experienced enough to deal with such a situation, having known her for such a long time. Using her pale and slender fingers, Henrietta tickled her behind her ears, mercilessly pushing her away before pinning her to the couch.

"Yeah, that's right. The merchandise is piling up, I hope that Naotsugu-san can help out— indeed, Marie will also be happy."

The mention of "Naotsugu" caused Maryele's body to shrink. Henrietta continued her telepathic conversation leisurely, completely ignoring Maryele.

"Sorry to trouble you. Okay, okay... see you some other time."

Henrietta had a bright smile on her face. She noticed Maryele pouting awkwardly.

"Why is Henrietta such a bully..."

"Bully? Marie must be mistaken."

When Maryele heard these words, a hesitant expression appeared on her pouting face. Set within the contours of her smooth, oval face, her sparkling eyes, full of expression, were extremely bewitching. However, Henrietta had no intention of spoiling her or letting Maryele off the hook. Henrietta's hobbies included both teasing and encouraging her.

"Are you sure it's okay to continue being like this? Naotsugu-san should be here in roughly an hour to help out."

"He's coming over to help out even though it's so late?"

"Indeed. Since it's hard to just rely on ladies to do all the moving."

Henrietta replied without changing her tone. Maryele stood up suddenly as though she had received an electric shock, grabbing her cardigans which lay beside her before running off, most likely to go back to her room to shower.

"I... I'm going out to pick some flowers!"

Uttering something which was obviously an excuse, Maryele left the room in a hurry. "Try your best," Henrietta waved at the departing figure and proceeded to sit down on the vacated sofa.

(Marie is still as cute as ever, it looks like I won't have to worry about this for a period of time. Seriously — this might be for the best.)

Henrietta retrieved a document from her bag and looked through it.

The vague details about Shiroe that Naotsugu disclosed reminded her of something which bothered her.

The document contained records which had been collated by the liaison committee: the guilds, businesses, groups and individuals who had applied to set up booths. The sheer scale of this festival exceeded expectations.

This was mainly due to the People of the Land. It wasn't just the League of Freedom Towns Eastal; merchants and nobles from the west also came to visit Akiba. Akiba's economic potential was far greater than its population would suggest. The People of the Land were captivated by this fact and scrambled to Akiba for profits, resulting in this grand exodus.

The members of the liaison committee led by Charasin had foreseen this. However, they realized that the actual figures exceeded their estimates by a wide margin. Everyone would be in for a shock come the next day's festival, especially the small and medium guilds.

The school festival-like booths that the Adventurers had set up would probably sell out their products in a flash. The intentions of the People of the Land and the Adventurers could not be more different. While the former came for the sake of "making bulk purchases", the latter bought singular items which caught their fancy.

(However...)

Henrietta readjusted her glasses with her index finger.

The silver-rimmed glasses which were one of Henrietta's defining features shone on her face. There was something amiss. While Henrietta did not have an extensive work history, she was still well-read and had a fair amount of accounting experience; she felt as though something unexpected was going to happen.

Henrietta bit her lip. The fear of the unknown was disconcerting.

(If it was Shiroe-sama...)

She could not remember when she started being able to recall that young man's face with such clarity.

As she thought about this carefully, his profile appeared from the depths of her mind. While Henrietta never had the opportunity to have a frank conversation with Shiroe, whenever that youth was dealing with a crisis and putting up a brave front, she had always just been watching from the sidelines. In the conference which led to the formation of the Round Table Council and the one in which Raynesia was brought forth, Henrietta had observed his profile while staying by his side as only an assistant.

This keen and resolute youth might be able to uncover the reason for the uneasiness in Henrietta's heart.

With such thoughts in mind, Henrietta opened her contact list. However, in the end, she chose not to contact him. It was a decision that she made after much consideration.

Shiroe was already bearing the burden of multiple responsibilities from the Round Table Council.

Shiroe should be spared from chores related to the festival if possible. This was something that both Charasin and Henrietta had agreed on. While it was not something that either of them had openly voiced out, both agreed that the Round Table Council had piled too much work onto Shiroe.

Besides, Shiroe currently had Akatsuki and Minori.

From Henrietta's point of view, these two young ladies possessed incomparable charm.

The sparrow-like Akatsuki was an elegant and beautiful young girl. Her long, flowing black hair was like a traditional doll's.

The pure and flawless Minori was delicate yet strong. She looked like someone that needed to be doted upon, yet her sense of responsibility made her distinct to other girls her age.

Knowing how they felt about Shiroe, Henrietta felt that she had no place among them.

Henrietta had always believed that she lacked appeal.

She had difficulty understanding the primal emotion of love. She felt she had no chance at intimate relationships like Maryele's. She had the desire to doll up Akatsuki, but Henrietta understood that those kinds of feelings were nothing like the romantic ones that couples shared.

While she did pay special attention to Shiroe, even thinking "Could it be...?" at one point, her feelings were not truly romantic in nature. She did not feel a need to be wed to him or even crave for his presence. There was a lack of such burning desires.

"The most outstanding amongst men."

Henrietta had given Shiroe such an assessment.

While she was still far from certain, she had at least verified that it was "those" sorts of feelings.

(In other words, my personality is too plain...)

This fact did not cause her to feel forlorn. She felt happy that thoughts of him came to her mind so often. Even though she felt that it wouldn't become anything more serious, she was content with the way things were.

To Henrietta, Akatsuki was a cute friend whom she wished to cherish, while the newcomer Minori was someone whom she hoped to form a deep friendship with. She was thankful that she was not in the way of either.

While she was unable to favor any side, she had already resolved to congratulate the one Shiroe chose.

She hoped that Shiroe—

That the lonely, overly-serious trickster would find happiness.

Perhaps Shiroe was the type who could spread happiness to the people around him once he himself was happy?

Henrietta certainly believed so.

(Although I do wish the three of them would speed things up.)

Henrietta sighed.

In regards to such matters, the two girls and Shiroe were all extremely dense. It was highly probable that they would encounter difficulty even under smooth-sailing circumstances. This was rather tantalizing since nothing could be done, even though it was hard not to feel concerned for them.

As Henrietta contemplated the love issues faced by the members of the sister guild, she had all but forgotten the sense of unease that she felt just moments ago. There was just too much work to be done in Akiba and too many things to consider.

Part 3

The sky was stained with a shade of gray.

A refreshing October breeze enveloped Akiba early in the morning. The sun had not started its proper ascent yet; the atmosphere was laden with moisture and tranquility.

Both the Akiba of this world and the Akiba of the old world were similar in topography and geographical layout. However, they obviously had their differences as well.

The city was covered with ancient trees, the roads and plaza were enveloped in greenery; various parts had become moss patches or grass fields.

Concealed throughout the city were deciduous trees, as well as plants which bore gem-like fruit. Akiba's ruined buildings were fused together with nature, turning the city into an intriguing scene.

The autumn dew dripped gently throughout the green streets.

Minori could feel the dew on the tips of her toes as she hurried towards the guild building.

It was the morning of the second day of the Libra Festival.

Today was the second day. Unlike the first day, where there had been a gradual build up in anticipation for the night's festivities, today would be marked by a series of standard activities.

The activities from the second day onwards included various conventions, a dinner party hosted by Raynesia, and the "Akiba Fair" that would run continuously from this night till the third day. These were the highlights of the Libra Festival. Indeed, the festival's main events would start today.

Most likely due to such anticipation, the streets which were normally deserted in the early morning were filled with a flurry of activity. People were moving packages around, obviously to stock their booths or in certain cases to restock goods which had been sold out.

Arriving at the entrance of the guild building, it was clear that the level of activity present was even greater. Many Adventurers could be seen passing through the doorway, both entering and leaving. Giving greetings full of energy and spirit, Minori entered this obsidian-black building.

Log Horizon was one of the eleven guilds that comprised the Round Table Council. Furthermore, Minori came here frequently in order to help Shiroe. Including the People of the Land lady who manned the front counter, many of the Adventurers who worked here were familiar with Minori.

Minori headed to the floor where the reference room and office of the Round Table Council were located, heading for the Production Guild Liaison Committee. Shiroe had asked her to retrieve documents from there once, so she knew its location.

This place had been filled with a panicky, disorganized atmosphere since early morning. There was an ungodly number of wooden boxes. They spilled out through the wide open door and into the corridor.

The Production Guild Liaison Committee played a central role in the festival. Hence it was already busy, even at this hour. Things that sounded like curses could be heard from within and people could be seen moving goods and frantically running in and out the door.

Minori entered the room quietly, greeting an Adventurer who she knew. She remembered he was a Blacksmith from 8th District Shopping Center.

"What's the matter Minori-chan?"

"Eh, um— may I know if Charasin-san is around?"

Minori felt out of place. The correct description would be the feeling that she had 'Carelessly stepped into someone else's territory'.

The smith, noticing Minori's anxious appearance, smiled and said, "Ah, he's inside, why don't you come in? Please excuse the mess!" He said this rather loudly, as he was probably delirious from pulling an all-nighter. Minori timidly stepped into the depths of the office.

At such an early hour, Minori had come to this place for a certain reason.

After Minori witnessed the private scene between Akatsuki and Shiroe last night, she had become depressed at her own shallowness. However, there was something she wished to accomplish during this Libra Festival: that was to rectify Shiroe's negative image.

Her initial plan was to have Shiroe attract attention by making him participate in the cake-eating competition. There would subsequently be an opportunity to get him an invitation to the Grand Dinner Party. Then by having him mingle with the other participants at the dinner party, she had hoped to make Shiroe more favorable to the public. That had been her original strategy.

(In the end, though, it failed...)

Minori felt that finishing twelve whole cakes was an insurmountable task.

Even though she felt that way, nothing could be done—it was aggravating.

However, a failure was still a failure. Since giving up was not an option, she had to find an alternative way to accomplish her goal. The plan that Minori had conceived within the unfamiliar portions of her mind was to get the Production Guild Liaison Committee to help out directly.

It was fortunate that she knew the guild master of 8th District Shopping Center, Charasin, personally. If Charasin had spare invitation cards to the Grand Dinner Party, was it possible to obtain one from him? Having this thought in mind, Minori headed for the Production Guild Liaison Committee.

However, it seemed that Charasin might be too busy for such matters. Minori had arrived at the central office (or was it the meeting room?) of the Production Guild Liaison Committee. Within this big room

was a wall of documents.

Minori was accustomed to such a scene. Shiroe's study was also strewn with large amounts of documents. In this world without computers, it was easy for documents to pile up. However, the mess in Shiroe's study paled in comparison to that of this room. At least in Shiroe's study, it was evident that effort was taken to tidy or minimize the mess. The only thing evident within this room was chaos and disorder.

At one corner of the office table in the center of the room, Charasin and his young assistant were trying their best to defend the borders of a territory known as "work space". However their efforts were in vain. Due to the encroaching barbarians— which were the mess of reports, they were at the edge of defeat.

Minori was hesitant to disturb Charasin due to the situation he was in. At this moment, behind Minori, a young man entered the room and reported energetically.

"Charasin-san! Here are the southern district's inventories and ledgers! I'll leave things to you~!"

The youth simply added these to the stack of documents and left. However, that simple action triggered a massive change in the battlefield that was the table. The scene likened to a horde of barbarians charging forward at full speed while blasting their battlehorns. The unstable pile of documents promptly collapsed like dominoes.

"Arrggh!" "Eek!"

Charasin and his assistant screamed aloud, their faces went pale with despair. After swearing simultaneously, the two of them proceeded to restack the fallen documents. Minori decided that it was a good time to help, and timidly raised her voice.

"Do you need help?"

"This is screwed up. Eh? Aren't you..."

"You're someone from Shiroe-san's side. If I recall, Minori-chan?"

"That's right. Let me give you a hand."

Minori rolled up the long sleeves of her outfit. She could not bring herself to leave this messy mountain of documents alone. Furthermore, if she helped out now, Charasin might develop a good impression of her and might be more willing to grant her 'request'. Minori had these considerations in mind.

"Yeah, that would be great, thanks... Taro, make me a cup of tea, make it a strong one please."

"Yes, right away!"

The youth who had been working non-stop for an unknown length of time left the room unsteadily. After watching him leave, Minori and Charasin started gathering the sheets paper strewn around the place. Most of them looked like booth application forms. There were also trade-related applications, letters of inquiry, letters of instruction, tax forms and various other documents. All of these had been lumped

together under the rationale that "the contents are roughly the same anyway", forming the mountain of documents.

"Charasin-san... um, these are all different types of documents."

"I know they're all different, but we lost track of their organization. Moreover there was no proper format or standard to begin with. Even documents of the same type have completely different contents."

Charasin sighed dejectedly.

"I never knew it would be so troublesome. Seriously, People of the Land can be so hard to deal with. I wonder if we should tax them as well..."

"People of the Land? What about them?"

"It's nothing, really. In business, it's normal to add on or even to change your merchandise at the last minute. But I never expected such a large number of people. Or the fact that the documents would be written in such a haphazard manner. This is probably due to a difference in culture I guess. If it were our own guild, it wouldn't be much of an issue. But the Round Table Council wanted this festival to be properly documented."

'You can see the rest, I'm sure?' Charasin indicated with a shrug. The mess in front of them was rather intimidating. Even though they understood the importance of an efficient filing system, the influx of various inquiries and tasks made it almost impossible to organize the documents properly.

Charasin was someone who Shiroe held in high esteem. He had an excellent ability to think critically and, when needed, could come to a decision quickly. The people under him, too, seemed very diligent.

Despite the lack of organization, they were able to set aside the problem and continue their operations due to his sound judgment. The current situation was still manageable, but Charasin was becoming desperate. There were delays in the processing of documents, regardless of whether they were old or new.

"I'll stay here and help out today."

"Are you sure? Isn't Log Horizon also busy today?"

Minori gave a moment's consideration before offering to help. The plan involving the cake-eating contest had been discontinued, hence she truly had time to spare.

"I'm quite free right now."

"In that case, even though it's rather embarrassing, we'll be relying on you... To be honest, I don't have time to sort out these documents. Henrietta also seems rather busy today."

Minori nodded in response to what Charasin had just said. Shiroe had mentioned to her that Henrietta was also involved in the business of the liaison committee. Perhaps the current mess was due to her absence, having gone to one of the conventions.

"I guess I'll just have to sort them out one at a time."

Minori shifted the documents next to her onto the floor. Reaching into her bag, she retrieved a piece of parchment and ink. Although her level was not high, she had crafted these herself.

Using her unsheathed knife as a paperweight, she started to go through the pile of documents, starting from the top. There was no need to rush, however speed was essential— this one was a warehouse receipt. Minori nodded to herself, placing it within an area which had been partially cleared. That made one receipt. This here was a report made by patrol officers regarding the discovery of a security breach. That made one report.

This was just the start and it was only the first step. Even if it was a small step, it wasn't cause to be discouraged. The results would obviously be small in the beginning. The important thing was to remain focused and consistent while moving forward.

(After all, I haven't done anything yet.)

Even though she worshipped Shiroe—and even had feelings for him—she had not taken any steps. The searing pain that Minori had felt when she had discovered this truth was still burning within her heart.

Since it was like this, she needed do something about it.

Since she had feelings for Shiroe, she wanted to do something for him.

She was just an ordinary middle-schooler. But in order to meet these feelings of love head-on, Minori hoped that she would be able to offer something to Shiroe.

This was the resolution that Minori had made after she overcame the agony that had seared in her heart on that particular night.

Before, she just blindly worshipped him and chased after him, seeking to reach his level without any other consideration. But now, her heart held a new objective.

Had she only wanted to follow in Shiroe's footsteps, wanted to see the same scenery that he saw, then reaching his level would have been fine. But if she wanted to help him, she would have to acquire other abilities. Walking down his path but seeking to acquire a different set of abilities would definitely be hard, however the current Minori wished to move forward on such a path.

The physical abilities of the Adventurers, such as their sight and reflexes, had been greatly enhanced.

Minori used these abilities to separate the documents with astonishing speed. Skimming through their contents, documents that she thought took priority were placed in a wooden box to the side. These were documents which needed to be checked by Charasin immediately. Other documents were sorted into appropriate categories.

The subclass which Minori now had was Apprentice. Minori hated the Tailor subclass and wished to switch out of it as soon as she was able. However, she had found it difficult to decide on a new subclass.

While she was deliberating, Shiroe suggested that she choose the Apprentice subclass in the meantime.

The Apprentice was one of the 'subclasses'; however, it was quite different from the others. It was similar to role-playing subclasses like Accountant or Fortune Teller, but was even more special.

An Apprentice could register another player as a "teacher" and receive abilities based on that player's subclass, "copying" over a few low-level skills. Minori could craft parchment and ink because she had registered Shiroe as her teacher—that was to say, those skills were copied over from Shiroe.

Apprentices received experience bonuses, so it was not hard to level up. Furthermore, the fact that skills were copied over from the teacher made it even more easy. However, because an Apprentice could only copy skills that were mid-level and below and the subclass lacked its own "unique set of skills", it was not very popular.

An Apprentice's true defining feature was only evident after maturity. Apart from some special subclasses that had specific requirements, an Apprentice could switch to any subclass, and the skills pertaining to the new subclass would carry over along with all their current subclass experience.

For example, when a level 30 Apprentice switched subclasses to a Chef, he or she would become a level 30 Chef with the same level of experience as an Adventurer who had been a Chef since level one.

It was perfectly fine to start out as an Apprentice if you wanted to be a Blacksmith, which was quite tedious to train. However, a teacher was required and the list of items you could make would not increase as you leveled up so you would have to resort to other methods to increase your repertoire, which was one of the problems.

Minori was not concerned with such issues.

She had chosen this subclass to follow Shiroe, so those limitations were not really an obstacle. Having access to Shiroe's Scribe abilities was a great help in tackling this mess of documents in the current situation.

Minori roughly [formatted] the inexpensive parchment. Taking a sales application form, she listed down its items one by one. After she verified them, she made a "duplicate" and placed the original into a wooden box. Extracting desired information from documents was a task which Minori was very familiar with as it was something she had learned while assisting Shiroe with his work.

Minori looked at the mountain of documents.

Most likely this particular battlefield contained "something" that Shiroe had already acquired, that one was not able to obtain from the fights in Elder Tales. Minori currently was unable to grasp or understand what this "something" was.

The knowledge which Shiroe had imparted to her held many clues. The "Teachings of Shiroe" that Minori listened to contained many battle strategies from the time when Elder Tales was still a game. But it did not contain just that.

How to run a guild, records of past battles, the emotions experienced when playing online games—

happiness, sadness, injustice, forgiveness—the conflicts beyond the game itself, and the situations that would arise when different interests clashed. The secret of "that" was probably hidden within the things Shiroe had taught her.

However, Minori was inexperienced. She had to rely on such information like a crutch.

— That was why she wished to stay here and help out.

So as to not become a burden, Minori decided to stay here. She resolved to keep on fighting. This had once been Shiroe's battlefield, but it was now the target of her objective.

"Minori-chan has such a neat technique."

"That's because I'm Shiroe-san's disciple."

Minori replied with a smile on her face. She had a steadfast expression which was not present the night before.

Part 4

"Thanks—!"

"Acknowledged, there's five left~"

"Hey, I'm out! Bring some more here!"

On the morning of the second day of the festival, the city was filled with the clamor of activity.

Such a festival was unprecedented. No one was able to grasp the overall situation; not even Charasin, the head of the Production Guild Liaison Committee which oversaw the festival. After all, this festival had been initiated at the behest of the small and medium guilds who had wanted an opportunity to publicize their new products.

Due to the large scale of the festival, the Production Guild Liaison Committee had its hands full. It was easy to assume that the city was in a similar state of chaos.

However, the reality was rather different. This was because the city's Adventurers were filled with spirit and vitality.

In this alternate world, many of the Adventurers did not know what to do with their enhanced capabilities. Or rather, they were just bored. There were two ways they could go about their boredom: fall into depression or, in a case like the festival, help out and work. Because the latter was the default choice, the festival received a large amount of assistance.

Located on "The Bridge of All-Ages", a main road in Akiba, there was a large tent set up beside the parking space for carriages. Although this structure was called a tent, it was open on all sides, simply consisting of a roof supported by heavy metal struts at its four corners. It served as a simple field HQ. Members of the Black Sword Knights could be seen constantly coming and going and the person sitting on a folding chair planted in the middle of the tent, sticking out like a sore thumb, was their guild master, "Black Sword" Isaac.

"Give me a drink!"

"There aren't enough Summoners, dispatch some more!"

"There are no more Summoners available, so if you need more manpower, you'll just have to make do with what's available—if you need hot water or ice, go find yourself a Sorcerer."

"We're not just replacements for Summoners, you bastards! Ah, the ice is ready, go on and take it."

In a manner similar to the city's current bustle, the tent was also filled with incessant activity.

Akiba had a handful of combat guilds and Black Sword Knights was one of them. It was famed as the guild exclusive to 'Adventurers of the highest caliber who have been specially selected'. It was also known as a guild which specialized in completing challenging, high level quests. Most of its members were obviously hardcore gamers and the guild possessed a steadfast unity. This was the impression given to outsiders. However in truth, they were just a rowdy bunch.

"Hey, you guys are damn noisy!"

A loud coarse voice silenced the warriors' racket. It was the guild master, a Guardian named Isaac, who was famous throughout Akiba. He had a head full of blood-red hair and a confident, contemptuous smile on his face.

"You're really naggy, commander."

"You should just stay in your seat, boss."

"Chief is an idiot, his manner lacks consideration."

The comments made by the people who surrounded him caused Isaac to laugh heartily, as though he had been complimented. This was the way things were in Black Sword Knights. Isaac, who was given reproachful looks by his surrounding subordinates, yelled things such as "Ha! You guys seem rather energetic as usual!".

"The third sector's patrol team had returned."

"Great, thanks for your hard work."

Isaac greeted the three-man team which had just returned to the city. 'Ain't I a great guy, who shows concern? Greeting my men immediately shows that I have the mark of a true leader.' This was the internal monologue that played out in Isaac's mind. Regardless, Isaac did indeed have the appearance of a leader.

"So how did it go? Hm, did anything happen?"

"Indeed. We rescued a carriage which was stuck in a ditch, appeased a few brokers who were quarreling with each other, settled a payment dispute... things like that?"

"Good, that's the way!"

Isaac nodded like a boss, responding to his guild members' report.

Indeed, Black Sword Knights had taken the initiative to patrol the downtown area.

The small and medium guilds were unable to handle the unprecedented number of People of the Land nobles and merchants who had heard of the Libra Festival. Many merchants and businessmen had come in order to sell their wares. There was a need to deploy personnel to handle them and settle the disputes which broke out.

The Production Guild Liaison Committee was extremely hardworking; however, they were just an

organization which coordinated the interests of the guilds. Furthermore, their main duty was related to matters regarding the booths, so they had no capacity to handle the disputes in the downtown area.

Given these circumstances, Isaac had formed a patrol force responsible for policing the People of the Land.

This place was the "Bridge of All Ages", erected over the Kanda Canal, south of the downtown area. Travelers coming from Izu or from areas further west would have to cross the bridge to enter Akiba. The "policing" duty was actually rather simple. They would note down the merchants' names, the number of personnel in the group, the number of carriages as well as their contents—and that was it.

Compared to an immigration checkpoint in the old world, the checks were rather lax.

Isaac believed that the only requirement for this job was an intimidating appearance.

That was to say, you just had to be bold and resolute.

Black Sword Knights intentionally wore imposing armor suited for travelling. This was a preemptive tactic. Their striking appearance put "the fear of the law" into the hearts of those who came to visit the city, sending them a clear message: "if you try anything funny, someone is going to get hurt." Everything was handled using a combination of intimidation and prudence.

"Someone looks really free."

"Don't bother me for nothing. How are things at your side?"

Isaac appraised the approaching figure with a keen gaze. This well-built man who wore glasses was Isaac's peer, one of the eleven members of the Round Table Council and the leader of D.D.D.

He was someone whom Isaac did not wish to trifle with. Whether as a guild master or as a Guardian, he was the only one in the server who could match Isaac.

"There are no problems on my side as well."

Krusty raised the corners of his mouth slightly. Isaac judged this was how this bespectacled man smiled.



They had known each other since the days when this was a game. Though they belonged to different guilds, they were both highly ranked and competed for the Yamato server's top position. They had also spoken to each other quite a number of times. It would be completely wrong to say that they did not give a damn about each other's existence—they were rivals.

Large combat guilds such as the Black Sword Knights and D.D.D were extremely concerned with being the best at raids. The new raids which were included in every new expansion provided new challenges. These fresh battlefields were like virgin snow, untouched by the intrusion of anyone.

Their difficulty was obviously high.

Since these raids were designed to challenge skilled players accustomed to completing both individual and group objectives, the difficulty was extreme. The difficulty was designed with skilled players in mind. In order to beat them, players had to train to the highest level, have the best equipment and possess the strongest resolve. In other words, they had to be insanely hardcore players.

These new raids were an amalgamation of five to seven separate types of dungeons, the difficulty of these dungeons normally varied. It was a rule that the first ones to attempt these raids would end up completely wiped out, even if they had started from the easiest dungeons.

In those days, Isaac and his comrades did not fear such dungeons. Instead, they licked their lips fearlessly.

"This is going to be an enjoyable feast." This was the meaning behind that gesture.

Repeated battles, accumulated experience, beating the powerful final boss, these were accomplishments that couldn't be described with plain words. As a bonus reward, they earned Phantasmal-class items with potentially powerful abilities, resulting in an increase in their comrades' battle-strength. Using the item drops to increase their battle strength, they would then take on an even more difficult dungeon. They constantly repeated that process over and over again.

This race did not just involve the Black Sword Knights. Yamato server's strongest, D.D.D, competed with them as well. Who would be the first to defeat this boss? Who would be the first to clear that dungeon? The large scale guilds were competing for such bragging rights.

A guild which fought for the sake of reputation.

This was how Isaac envisioned a large-scale combat guild.

Obtaining Phantasmal-class items was just a bonus.

In Isaac's opinion, greedy gamers who played just for the sake of getting rare items were not considered warriors. Black Sword Knights denied such players from joining its ranks.

"Yeah. But..."

Isaac eyed the man in front of him as he sat in his chair.

"This calmness is making me lethargic. Won't it be better if something happened, to spice things up a bit?"

"That's hard to say."

"Can't the People of the Land start a dispute with us?"

This well-built, expressionless and indifferent man was also similar in nature to Isaac. Rank, ability, equipment and gold were all means to an end. He was a true player, one who had aimed to make his guild the top one in the Yamato server. Because of this, he was also willing to involve himself in mundane tasks like patrols. Because he could increase his reputation in this manner, but above all, because it gave him something to spend his time on.

"The difference in military strength is so great... the chances of this happening is roughly fifty percent I guess."

"Ha! What an assessment."

Isaac had learned to expect certain things from this bespectacled youth. If he said something, then it was likely to be true. Isaac personally felt that his statement was accurate as well.

"Hey."

"What's up?"

"That fellow. What's with 'Black Heart'?"

"What do you mean?"

Krusty returned Isaac's question with another question in his infuriating manner. Isaac glared at him, however it did not seem as though Krusty was trying to act dumb. Isaac shrugged and continued with the topic at hand.

"I can't really say if 'Black Heart' is smart or stupid."

"It's not impossible for him to be both?"

"I offered 'Black Heart' an invitation to join my guild once."

It was not known if the aforementioned person remembered this event.

Isaac had decided to play along during the formation of the Round Table Council. However, he remembered a certain incident with clarity. That was a few months after the Debauchery Tea Party had suddenly disbanded. People had speculated that it would eventually reform itself in the form of a guild, however that had not been the case. The Tea Party vanished, its members either left the game completely or resumed their solo player styles.

Shiroe was one of the rare players who had maintained his frequency of gameplay.

"After the Tea Party broke up, that 'Black Heart' participated in various raids as a mercenary. I invited him when he came here to form a party. And I invited him 'cause of his playing style, not 'cause he was associated with the Tea Party."

"What happened in the end?"

Krusty asked. Isaac cracked his neck causally and replied.

"He rejected it, with something like 'Sorry, I'm unable to meet the expectations such an invitation implies'. In the end, I wasn't bothered by it. Of course I'd want such a monstrous sonuva bitch like him in my guild, but I had no need for a player who had lost his resolve."

Isaac had indeed given up on inviting Shiroe.

But he had been unable to foresee the extent of Shiroe's growth, as well as the fact that he would cause such a scene in Akiba. Could it be that his initial evaluation had been a mistake? Isaac was bothered by this matter.

If he were asked whether he wanted to side with Shiroe, the answer would be a resounding YES.

Battling alongside that eccentric, bespectacled fellow would probably prove to be an interesting experience. It was likely that he would use methods as twisted as his visage to alter the outcome of the battlefield to the limits of what was possible. That had been the case when Isaac had partied with him. Where he was present, in situations wherein people were normally running out of MP, they found that at least ten of them could leisurely recover— it was mind-boggling.

"Is he a schemer or a gambler... someone who will burn out or someone whose ability improves over time?"

"Shiroe-kun— is probably the sort who performs the best in a situation where 'Anything goes'."

"Anything goes, huh..."

"I wouldn't consider him a schemer. He's reckless, unscrupulous, and doesn't care about the rewards; he just wants to accomplish his goals. In a situation with no limits, his strength is incomparable. It's akin to a demonic blade."

Up to this point, Isaac had been unable to follow the things which Krusty said. But upon hearing it said in this manner, he experienced an epiphany.

What Isaac had observed of the past Shiroe was just his shell.

The imposing man they had seen at the conference that led to the formation of the Round Table Council was Shiroe's true form. Isaac was exhilarated at this thought; he laughed out loud while facing the big man standing next to him.

"So that's why the demonic blade is currently groaning under the pile of work we buried him in. In that case, when will you unsheathe it again? Since that fellow has his uses. Well then... I think I'll go around and take a look at the festival. Hey Krusty, join me will you!"

After Isaac gave an earful to a reporting subordinate, he invited Krusty to come along. They left together in the direction of their city, filled with both Adventurers and People of the Land.

Part 5

Going a short while back in time. On another corner street, the ladies of Crescent Moon Alliance were preparing for the winter fashion show.

The location was at a place known as the "Shirogane Hall". It had been renovated to create this exhibition space.

In the old world, the building which contained the exhibition hall faced a large electronics store. However, in this alternate world's Akiba, these had been replaced with ruins.

The current Shirogane Hall was the result of 2 months' worth of time-consuming renovations. Although it was in ruins, only the upper floors had their access cut off. Other than that, it was more or less intact. The high ceilings of the place, similar to a hotel lobby's, made it even easier to renovate.

Pouring cement into a frame made with wooden planks, then using plaster to shape the exterior. With the successful implementation of such a method, the renovation work had been made much easier. This method was invented after the formation of the Round Table Council. Because Adventurers had the ability to craft items quickly, the work could be carried out swiftly. Another assisting factor was the fact that the labor force was headed by elves.

Shirogane Hall had been partitioned into various areas for respective events and other purposes. The place set aside for the main activity of the autumn festival was the largest hall in the building. Many guilds had set up booths within this space and were busy with last minute preparations.

Crescent Moon Alliance's clothing retail team was just one team among many others from different guilds. They were currently sprucing up their own booth.

The booth's area was five square meters. This was all taken up by the table which contained the cash register and the boxes which stored their merchandise. They set up the display cases, which had been converted from cupboards, arranging their signature products within—shirts colored with plant-based dyes.

Apart from Maryele, there were others who were manning the booth as well, acting as sales assistants. Akatsuki, who had been dragged here early this morning, was at one corner of the store, being dressed up by a fanatic Henrietta.

"Akatsuki-chan is really cute! Seriously! I think I might faint!"

"This outfit is fine, I guess..."

Akatsuki protested in this manner while raising her gaze, causing Henrietta to swoon in adoration. ♥s were popping out from her body. When Akatsuki tried to escape, Henrietta grabbed her by her wrist. "It's not over yet," she declared mercilessly.

Akatsuki was wearing the booth's merchandise. She wore a waistcoat colored with plant dyes complementing a black top worn underneath, and an asymmetrical cotton skirt. The tassels on the hem of the skirt and the wooden-bead necklace created an ethnic feel. It was very cute.

"Why don't you apply some makeup since you rarely have the opportunity."

"Such a thing... uu, I'm not really used to it."

"It's not a problem—Relax."

Henrietta kneeled down so that she was eye to eye with Akatsuki. Akatsuki looked extremely uneasy and was planning to escape, however Henrietta gave a 'no' gesture with the eyeliner in her hand. She blocked Akatsuki, sealing off all her escape routes.

Women had much better complexions in this alternate world. In Akatsuki's opinion, there was no need for makeup at all.

However, makeup was not something which was applied because it was "needed". "You look great". Girls were not satisfied with just achieving this level—this was part of their nature.

Akatsuki was not averse to makeup herself. In the old world, she applied makeup, albeit sparingly. (A fact she hid out of embarrassment).

Furthermore, in this alternate world, it made one feel vain to appraise one's own face in a mirror.

In their original world, applying makeup was something done without a second thought. However, when you considered it carefully, it may have actually been a symbolic action. Wasn't it equivalent to changing skin textures in game terms? In a sense, it was similar to changing one's identity.

While Akatsuki had used makeup in the original world, her experience was limited to the application of lip gloss. She had never painted her lips or used mascara before.

"Guu~"

"Akatsuki-chan is the image of Japanese beauty."

"?"

While Akatsuki was busy reminiscing on her personal experience with makeup, Henrietta had been swiftly applying it on her. Akatsuki was helpless and sat stiffly as Henrietta used a fine lipstick to define the lines of her lips.

"Relax, I've only applied a light layer of makeup. Though, it still looks natural enough to fool those stupid men who can't tell the difference anyways— Furthermore, Akatsuki-chan fits the image of a Japanese beauty, so if you wear this sort of ethnic-themed outfit or an outfit that is too casual, the effect would be rather clashing. Hence we need to intensify the colors a bit. We'll also fix up your hair with a hairpin."

Akatsuki could only nod her head in response.

Indeed, as Akatsuki looked downwards, she noted that this sort of dress which was ethnic-themed or village-themed did not match her black hair.

Following Henrietta's directions, Akatsuki used a few pieces of blotting paper, removing most of the oil on her face. Henrietta exclaimed "Hu hu! So cute~". She grabbed Akatsuki and hugged her with a “XD” expression on her face.

Until recently, Akatsuki would have felt offended at being treated as a mascot. However, for some strange reason, she could tolerate such treatment in this world of Elder Tales.

(Is it because I don't feel like I'm being looked down on?)

While that might have been the case, Akatsuki still resisted slightly. Noticing this, Henrietta released her after tidying up her hair with a hairpin. The hairstyle which she saw in the mirror consisted of her normal straight long hair, however as it had been affixed with the hairpin, it gave her the feel of an onesan.

Akatsuki used to think that such a hairstyle did not go well with her short stature, so she had avoided it. However, that did not seem to be the case once she actually saw it. Akatsuki relaxed her expression involuntarily.

(The feel of an onesan... I like the sound of that!)

"How is it?"

"Well... ah."

Akatsuki was speechless. She felt delighted inside, but to actually admit that would make her uncomfortable. She didn't want to look like she was showing off. At the same time, though, it would be ungrateful of her to deny her feelings after Henrietta had spent so much time on her.

Her clothes and makeup were all products featured in this exhibition.

"Do you not like it? Shiroe-sama, it's cute isn't it?"

"Uh, eh?"

Akatsuki's hesitation was erased by Henrietta's words. It was as though she had been petrified by Medusa's gaze. A chill ran down her back. (It couldn't be?) she thought uneasily.

"Mm, I think it suits her."

A deep calm voice appeared from behind her—a voice which always sounded a bit troubled. It came from Akatsuki's lord, Shiroe.

"When did you—"

"I just arrived. After all, I've been asked to help out as well."

Shiroe shrugged while he continued. Akatsuki was unable to meet his gaze. Akatsuki's mouth was

trembling in a weird shape, it was as though it was not her part of her body.

Unaware of the hidden feelings that were present, Henrietta asked, "How is this current getup?" pushing the reluctant Akatsuki (who felt like hiding) forward.

Akatsuki frantically tried to hide behind Shiroe's back, however Henrietta gently grabbed hold of her and held her tight. While Akatsuki could easily push Henrietta away and escape, that was too extreme a course of action.

In the end, Akatsuki had to put up with her current appearance, she looked accusingly at both Henrietta and Shiroe. What she thought to be an obvious expression of her hatred looked like puppy eyes to the other two. It was simply gorgeous.

"Relax Akatsuki, that look suits you."

Shiroe placed his hand on top of Akatsuki's head. Whenever Shiroe did that, her temperature would rise easily. Akatsuki hated that part of herself. Shiroe might have replied out of reflex or courtesy, but Akatsuki was delighted nonetheless. This caused her some conflict.

(Agh! I don't have the right to be considered a shinobi!)

Akatsuki frantically tried to restore her original expression. However, she lacked her usual confidence today.

"What do you need me to do?"

"Shiroe-sama, please wear these clothes."

Shiroe gave a dejected expression when he looked through the clothes that Henrietta had given him. While they appeared comfortable, Shiroe did not seem to like them. Akatsuki felt a tiny bit of happiness with regard to this fact.

(My lord, this is your punishment for humiliating me.)

Since Shiroe was always seen wearing fancy clothes, Akatsuki wished to see how he looked like in casual clothes. Just as Akatsuki was about to open her mouth to say something, she was interrupted by a clear ringing sound that came from outside.

There was a brief moment of silence. Then it was broken by what sounded like cheering, and clapping also started from an unknown source.

Maryele, who had appeared in front of the three of them, was also clapping her hands happily.

— It had begun. This was the first festival organized by the Adventurers in this alternate world. At this exhibition which was one of the main events of the festival, the large hall was filled with all sorts of clothing and accessories.

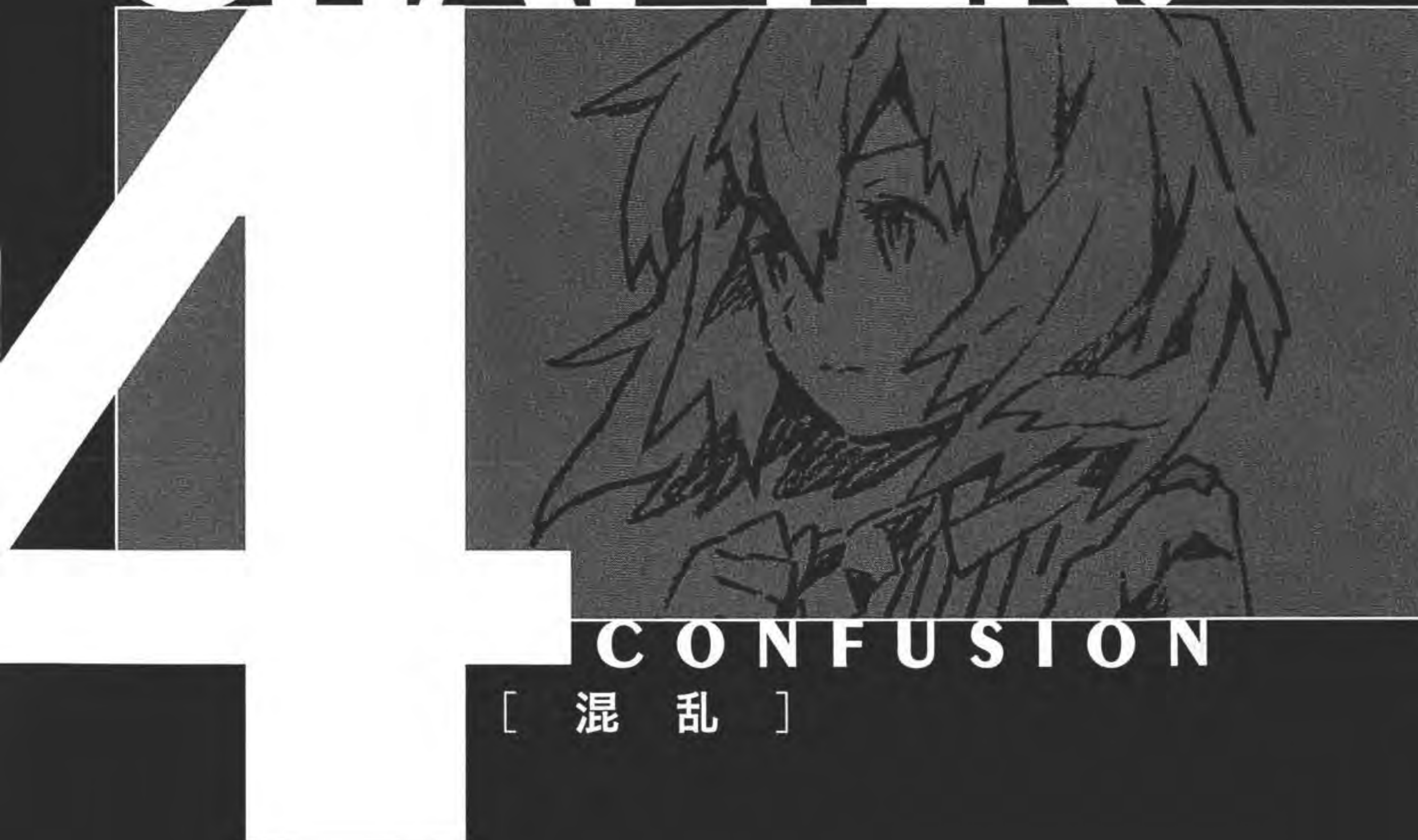
"Alright, who's coming today? I hope business will be great... though making a 100 pieces might have been too much, just try your best everybody!"

"The show's about to start. Shiroe-sama, Akatsuki-chan... please help out for this half of the day. The two of you are the models for our booth, try hard to achieve good results!"

Shiroe and Akatsuki lost to the bright smiles on the faces of those two. They could only nod repeatedly in response.

It was the second day of the Libra Festival. The curtains were rising. The highlight of this exhibition was about to begin.

CHAPTER.



CONFUSION

[混 乱]

▶ NAME: MINORI

▶ AGE: 14

▶ WEAPON: DILIGENCE

▶ SPECIALITY: FULL BATTLE CONTROL
(SIMPLIFIED VERSION)

▶ BIRTHDAY: SEPTEMBER 18

▶ FAVORITE FOOD: CAULIFLOWER

▶ ITEM 1:

[PLAIN DENIM SKIRT]

A REGULAR LONG SKIRT WITHOUT ANY SPECIAL ABILITIES, MADE FROM DENIM CLOTH. HOWEVER, IT IS SO WELL-SEWN THAT YOU CAN FEEL THE SINCERITY IN THE WORKMANSHIP. IT WAS ACTUALLY MADE BY A PEOPLE OF THE LAND ARTISAN WHO WAS INSPIRED BY THE DESIGNS OF ADVENTURER OUTFITS. MINORI BOUGHT IT WITHOUT KNOWING ABOUT THIS FACT.



▶ ITEM 2:

[FRESHWATER PEARL SCRUNCHIE]

A SCRUNCHIE MADE FROM SMALL FRESHWATER PEARLS. WHEN MINORI BECAME SHIROE'S ASSISTANT, THE OPPORTUNITIES TO TIE UP HER HAIR INCREASED, HENCE HENRIETTA PASSED HER PERSONAL SCRUNCHIE TO HER. IT CAN ALSO BE WORN AS A BRACELET.



▶ ITEM 3:

[WHITE BESPECTACLED BEAR DOLL]

A DOLL THAT MINORI MADE. IT WAS MADE AS ONE OF THE ITEMS TO BE TRADED IN THE CITY ORIGINALLY. HOWEVER, SHE LIKED THE DOLL SO MUCH THAT SHE KEPT IT. ITS EYES ARE TOO SHARP NO MATTER HOW YOU LOOK AT IT, BUT ITS OWNER LIKES THIS PART ABOUT IT.





<CHEMISTRY SET>

WHEN YOU COMBINE THIS RED
POTION WITH THE BLUE ONE.....
IT'S YUMMY!

Part 1

The entire floor was jam-packed right from the start.

There were teams of Adventurers representing their guilds, girls shopping for the lowest prices, traders queuing to buy the works of renowned artisans, and noblemen merchants dressed in their splendor.

Although the crowd had been expected, few guilds had foreseen that it would be such a grand spectacle. The scene was chaotic, with various stalls busy touting customers.

This large hall was the venue for the clothing expo.

Since the wares here were limited to "clothing", not all the production guilds had set up booths here. It was a matter of course that the three big production guilds, who had at least 500 members each, had various departments that catered to different industries and needs. However, the small or medium-sized guilds would usually choose to specialize in a specific type of product.

For instance, Amenona was a weapons production guild that was known to all of Akiba's insiders. It specialized in the production of Japanese swords. All of its members were high-level Blacksmiths. Their dedication, which stemmed from their near-freakish obsession with quality, allowed them to rediscover the techniques for manual forging in this post-Catastrophe world. Such a guild would obviously not have Tailors, and would naturally not partake in the exhibition held within this building.

However, the entire Libra Festival was a big opportunity for all sorts of guilds and artisans.

This floor was a market which specialized in clothing and was indoors at the request of the female Adventurers. However, a 'flea market' was also being held outside concurrently, centered along the main streets. The open-air stalls there were selling all sorts of different wares.

The clothing market was held in the building's interior, but the market outside sold weapons, armor, and even jewelry. To be honest, the heart of the festival was obviously the 'flea market' being held outside; however, the clothing expo also received a significant amount of attention as well.

The clothing market's main event was the 'fashion show'. Basically, it was an event featuring the clothing various guilds had designed with as much attention to detail as their ingenuity. Models would wear these fashion items and parade on a runway. The models were Adventurers famous in Akiba for their popularity or appearance. With so many of them gathered and appearing in the show, it wouldn't be surprising if a good portion of the crowd were actually here as fans instead of shoppers.

The booths were split into two categories: large and small.

The large booths had more personnel and had a greater variety of wares on display. These were the booths of the large-size guilds. They were situated against walls, making the transportation of goods an easy task.

The area in the middle of the floor had been partitioned into semi-open spaces for the small booths. These were used by the small and medium-size guilds.

Crescent Moon Alliance's booth was not situated in a good location. It was rather far from the center of the floor, but it was not close to the walls either. With regards to the crowd's traffic, it was a rather unfavorable location, it was also far from the fashion show's runway. Hence, it was expected that their business would be a bitter struggle.

However, Crescent Moon Alliance was different from the pure production guilds. "Let's try anything as long as it interests us!" That was the sort of guild it was. In fact, its booth was only set up by the members who had expressed an interest in doing so. It was not a concerted effort by the entire guild.

Since the Crescent Moon Alliance was a friendly guild full of equally-friendly Adventurers, players, even council members, were willing to lend them a hand if they asked. However, when compared to pure production guilds, their experience in business was a little lacking. If, perchance, they got a good location, rumors of them abusing their position in the Round Table Council were bound to come up. In this sense, their location was very appropriate.

"Say, isn't this crowd a bit ridiculous?"

Henrietta grabbed hold of Maryele, who had lost her composure and was exclaiming "wuah~, wuah~". She took this guild leader, who had such a voluptuous body that it incited hatred from others, dragged her back to the counter, and sat her down on a stool.

"Marie, you are a guild master, how can you lose your cool like that? Do me a favor and sit here quietly."

"You're right. It's just that, how do I put it in words, I haven't seen so many people in quite a while..."

Maryele felt restless inside and was unable to settle down.

What she had said was indeed true. In the original world, taking a crowded train was a common routine. In the heart of Tokyo Prefecture, it was a common sight to see thousands of pedestrians going about their business in front of train stations or at crossroad junctions.

However, ever since they came to this world due to the Catastrophe, they never had the opportunity to see such scenes anymore. Despite the fact that Akiba's central plaza was filled with activity, it never felt crowded due to its spacious open area.

This place made people reminisce of the crowded conditions back in their original world. The crowd had rushed in immediately after the opening, gathering around the myriad booths to shop.

The fact that they could still afford to quarrel despite this ongoing commotion proved that Crescent Moon Alliance's booth was away from the main traffic of the crowd.

Like a waterfall splashing against the rocks below, the bulk of the crowd first swarmed the booths of the large-scale guilds situated next to the walls. Subsequently, smaller streams of people made their way towards the booths of the small and medium guilds which were located near the stage.

However, they were only able to afford the luxury of observing the crowd in such a detached manner for roughly half an hour.

After the large guilds had attracted long queues, a significant number of people started to think in the following manner: "Isn't it better if we looked at the smaller booths rather than line up now?"

Henrietta had initially planned to deploy Maryele (or rather her smile) on the frontline, with herself serving as the cashier and accountant. However, current circumstances made this increasingly difficult to do.

The number of People of the Land was greater than expected.

The members of Crescent Moon Alliance who were stationed at this stall were Maryele, Henrietta, and two Tailors. Apart from this booth and the fashion show, the Crescent Moon Alliance had also set up an al-fresco restaurant and a weapons shop at the flea market.

As Maryele was the guild master, it was expected of her to make an appearance at every one of their booths. Henrietta had decided that it would be best to keep Maryele here only until this afternoon after the fashion show. By doing so, only the two inexperienced guild members would be left to man the booth.

Henrietta snuck a look at the aforementioned two. They shook their heads in response.

The meaning behind it was clear. "No way, no way, we're not familiar with this!" The two of them were expressing this through their gazes.

Henrietta was negotiating business and sighing internally at the same time.

If the other party was an Adventurer who simply wanted to buy outdoor clothes for daily use, there would hardly be an issue. Since they were all from another world, they were all equally unfamiliar with conducting such business. Thus what they were doing could be better described as merely "playing business". But that was more than enough for Adventurers.

On the other hand, the People of the Land were mostly merchants and traders.

Furthermore, the purpose of their visit was not simply to pick out clothes that they liked. They were here to gather information, make new contacts, and, if possible, to negotiate the establishment of a supply line. Hence, they would make inquiries about the price, the materials, and even in depth details such as how things were sewn.

(However, I have neither the experience nor the know-how for such a responsibility...)

With this thought in mind, Henrietta politely refused the inquiries of the middle-aged People of the Land merchants with a smile on her face.

(During the formation of the Round Table Council, having put one over the three big production guilds—could it be that I've developed a taste for this kind of situation?) Henrietta thought to herself.

Henrietta was currently in her 20s.

One could not regard her as experienced.

Although she was technically a 'professional', she knew a person in his or her 20s, like herself, was like a newly hatched chick with its eggshell still stuck to its head. But she also knew that in order to graduate from being a hatchling, one had to gain experience in the frontline. Henrietta understood this through personal experience.

(I can't just leave this to my juniors... I have to at least take care of the troublesome merchants before I try making sense of the situation.)

Her guild mates could probably sense Henrietta's concerns.

It might have been a result of their subconscious team spirit, but while Henrietta handled a People of the Land merchant, the remaining three Crescent Moon Alliance members arranged themselves into formation to handle an Adventurer.

The inexperienced pair packaged the wares while the smiling Maryele received the payment. The transaction was then completed after the three bowed in appreciation.

Henrietta observed this scene from the corner of her eye as she handled the inquiries of the People of the Land. Given the scale of the Crescent Moon Alliance, even an order of a 100 pieces a month was far too large for them to handle. If it needed to be refused, it needed to be refused— this was something that Henrietta had put her foot down on.

(If I agreed to such a contract, I have no idea what the consequences would be like. Since a man who has such a pitch-black nature like Shiroe-sama exists, I truly cannot afford to let my guard down... eh?)

Henrietta examined her surroundings.

She had just realized that Shiroe had disappeared.

She remembered throwing him the clothes that he was meant to wear, but now, that overbearing man was currently nowhere near the booth. There was no sign of a certain black-haired girl either.

"—Shiroe-sama?"

After checking that there were no troublesome customers coming or going, Henrietta straightened her back and scanned the area. While Henrietta was taller than Maryele by a bit, the endless traffic in front of the stall obscured her vision.

"Where is—"

"Yes, the items this time are experimental. Therefore, for the sake of getting as much feedback from as many people as possible, every customer is restricted to two items."

"I've already made it clear that I'm willing to pay!"

"That's not the problem."

Henrietta, who had craned her neck to search, heard Shiroe's bland voice.

It sounded like he was dealing with somebody's complaint. Henrietta examined the endless streams of people and finally spotted Shiroe's figure at a booth located opposite the passageway.

Shiroe was wearing a long sleeveless hooded vest. This, coupled together with a thin long-sleeved T-shirt worn on the inside, made him look "presentable". He was holding his ground, with a steady expression, in front of a merchant who looked impatient to the point of releasing steam from his head.

Wearing Crescent Moon's apparel, Shiroe looked more like a normal Japanese youth than a character from medieval times. That appearance gave Henrietta a nagging feeling that she was getting a sneak peek into Shiroe's private life back in the original world.

"Sorry, please let me through!"

Henrietta only managed to get a glimpse of him before losing him in the crowd again. She cut through the mass of customers enjoying the expo and rushed towards the opposite booth.

That was the guild Cocoa Brown's booth.

Shiroe stood among the staff, facing a merchant who was shaking in frustration. Akatsuki was next to him, but it seemed as though Shiroe was stopping her rather than protecting her.

Cocoa Brown's clothing stall seemed to specialize in small accessories, selling beautiful precious stones of various colors as well as delicately-crafted necklaces and earrings.

Henrietta felt that the items on display were very classy. She had already seen them earlier, before the expo's opening, when she was greeting the booths around theirs. Furthermore, the items were priced shockingly low, to which the Cocoa Brown staff explained that 'This is in gratitude to the battle guilds that have been taking care of small guilds like ourselves.'

"It's like I've been saying, right? If you sell them to me, your crafters will be known among the People of the Land—"

"I'm sorry, please leave."

Shiroe continued to reject the merchant's offer.

By this point, the crowd nearby had noticed the commotion and naturally formed a semicircle around Cocoa Brown.

This ill-mannered merchant was trying to buy Cocoa Brown's goods in bulk. It was okay to buy just one or two items, but a bulk purchase would make the stall unable to continue its operation for the remainder of the expo.

If their aim had been profit or to sellout, then Cocoa Brown would have sold everything by then. But that was not the case. It was their heartfelt wish that their products would prove useful to Akiba's local Adventurers. Thus, their policy of limiting the items sold per customer didn't sit well with businessmen.

Adventurers had superior physical and magical capabilities in comparison to the People of the Land. Their subclass level could allow them to achieve crafting capabilities comparable to a master artisan's skill.

However, haggling and negotiations did not depend on physical abilities. After all, the proficiency of some skills depended entirely on one's personality and traits. Furthermore, the issue at hand had nothing to do with physical capabilities and instead was about interpersonal skills.

This was why Shiroe had intervened.

He decided to lend a helping hand.

(This line of reasoning shouldn't be too far from the truth— ahhh, this Person of the Land-san is quite unlucky.)

"Don't get so cocky, kid!"

Just as Henrietta managed to squeeze her way through the crowd to reach the area in front of Cocoa Brown, the Person of the Land finally snapped and tried to punch Shiroe.

The onlookers that gasped were mainly People of the Land.

Some of them even averted their eyes.

However, the result was as Henrietta had expected.

Shiroe stopped the punch with his fingers.

Shiroe was an enchanter. Like the other magic classes, an enchanter's stamina and strength were lower than the other classes— however, that only applied when compared to an Adventurer of a different class and of similar level.

With a level difference of over 50, and up against a People of the Land no less, even as a magician, the difference in agility and strength was overwhelming. In Shiroe's eyes, the haughty merchant's fist was nothing more than a balloon.

Because Shiroe caught the People of the Land's punch, it was not judged as an "attack" and there was no sign of the city guards appearing.

As he caught the punch from the middle-aged merchant with his left hand, Shiroe stopped Akatsuki with his right, probably to keep her from drawing her dagger. Akatsuki gave Shiroe a displeased look.

"Have you had enough?"

Shiroe asked with a smile.

In spite of his smile, the bard Henrietta could clearly sense a formless energy being focused in Shiroe.

Shiroe was gathering the mana in the air. Because both bards and enchanters were similar in that they could provide mana to their party, Henrietta was keenly aware of what was happening.

The expressions on the faces of other Adventurers also changed as they became aware of Shiroe's actions.

Brandishing a friendly smile on his face, Shiroe gradually amplified the oppressing atmosphere. All around them, a look of horror could be seen.

Shiroe was not casting any spell.

He was merely accumulating mana without casting one.

Therefore, it was not an act of combat and the city guards would not appear. Moreover, his expression was kind and did not contain even a hint of aggression.

And even though the People of the Land weren't as sensitive to magic as Adventurers, at that point, they too should have felt the enormous amount of mana emanating from Shiroe.

The middle-aged merchant's face rapidly grew white and withdrew his fist from Shiroe's hand.

"This is unpleasant, I'm leaving!"

He hastily muttered these words and fled the scene.

"There are a lot of hot-blooded people."

"My lord, didn't you also force him into a corner?"

"If you had dealt with him, wouldn't he have lost his head?"

"After breaking all of his limbs."

Shiroe appeased Akatsuki as she tilted her face up.

Shiroe shrugged helplessly as members of Cocoa Brown thanked him. The cute and round face of the dwarf girl had tears of gratitude in them as she held his hands tightly.

"Shiroe-sama."

Henrietta was startled when she heard her own voice.

That was because it contained a somewhat displeased tone.

"What's the matter?"

"Nothing, it's just that..."

"My lord, it must be time for us to go back to work."

"That's right."

Upon hearing Akatsuki's reply, Shiroe scratched his head, his previous aura having totally disappeared. The crowd nearby had also begun dissipating as though satisfied with the ending.

"Henrietta-san?"

"Yes, Shiroe-sama?"

"— This expo is so chaotic."

Henrietta instantly set aside her musings on "Why am I feeling unhappy?" and considered the meaning behind Shiroe's statement.

A chaotic expo.

The disturbance in this incidence should be referring to the People of the Land incident just now. Thinking back, she had also just handled a business transaction that nearly turned into a fight. It was because on one side, there was a People of the Land, while on the other, it was an Adventurer that was lacking in experience... that was what Henrietta suspected. Did Shiroe think differently?

(Shiroe-sama saw something? If that's the case...)

Henrietta was in doubt. She couldn't decide whether or not to inform him of her bad premonition from earlier.

"Erm, Shiroe-sama..."

"Indeed, the actions of the People of the Land are suspicious, but given that we don't know enough, we simply cannot make anything out of this situation."

She understood the things which Shiroe had just whispered. In other words, he too had felt some sort of unknown machination.

Akatsuki looked at him worriedly.

Henrietta wanted to talk to him so that perhaps, with his insight, he could shed new light on her doubts.

However, Shiroe had already begun to act. Speaking softly, he definitely was not talking to himself, but was contacting others through telepathy.

He focused on his secret conversation.

Finally, he nodded and turned towards Henrietta and stated his deduction clearly.

"It seems as though someone is attacking Akiba."

Part 2

Today, Raynesia had been in a rush since the break of dawn.

Of course, this was not of her own volition.

She had believed that she could let her hair down while the festival's preparations were taking place— at least eventually.

She had planned to become "plant-like", to be a lazy-bum, to act like a "spoiled child" to her heart's content.

However, dealing with a near constant stream of invitations and guests made her unable to make time for an afternoon nap. Elissa was bustling around the room like a bee, taking out dresses and accessories from everywhere and considering how to pair them with each other.

The reason why Elissa was behaving in this manner was not because she was one of those airheaded girls who enjoyed dressing up.

In the nobles' society, an event such as a dinner party or a formal meeting was an important gathering which was used as a show of prestige. A mere trinket could convey multiple meanings and messages to other parties according to its value, its color, and what gemstones it contained. This was how nobles socialized: with subtlety and allusion.

For instance, Raynesia was the second daughter of a duke. However, because the eldest daughter had already married out of the family, she was considered the oldest daughter in the family line. Also, while the reason for her deployment to the city was publicly announced as "a sincere and personal apology to the Adventurers", in reality, she was there as the representative of both the members of the League of Freedom Towns Eastal and the Corwen clan. This was a rather evident fact.

Therefore, in situations like a formal reception, she had to make absolutely certain that Eastal's most prestigious noble family— Clan Corwen— would not be shamed. On the other hand, using her status as a representative as a shield, she could then leave subtle hints under the table. When meeting with merchants, she had to don jewelry of the appropriate value so as not to be despised, and when she was meeting with nobility, accessories that stressed her family's lineage and status were in order. If both parties knew each others' family situations, one could choose to avoid a fashion faux pas by wearing something that clashed with the other party's, or one could even intentionally dress to compliment their attire. In the end, it was a game of complex psychological warfare.

Given that such a task needed a meticulous eye for detail and it could not be performed by the inexperienced maids who served as her helpers, the choice was left to Elissa to handle. It had to be executed by someone who was familiar with the mannerisms of nobles, as well as the customs of the clan. Such was Elissa.

It was obvious that she could not wear the same attire the entire day.

She had to change her clothes and accessories for each new guest, making her very busy.

Nobles were very particular about keeping appearances. For instance, among the nobility, it was considered bad form to refuse the request of another party right on the spot. This was true even for cases like a minor noble making a request to a higher-classed noble. Even if it were just for show, she had to follow such customs to satisfy the demands of high society.

Thus when making requests, a lower noble would have to be more careful 'not make a request the other party cannot agree to', and if you were the higher-classed noble to whom the request was made to, one had to show subtle 'hints reminding the other party to know their place'. In this political dance, clothes, gossip and gifts were the tools of the trade.

"Ah, really... What am I to do about the dinner party? I really have no idea what these Adventurers find tasteful."

"Can't we just go with the usual?"

"And what is this 'usual' you speak of?"

"Um... light and airy?"

"Princess Raynesia, really?"

Even Elissa, it seemed, had not fully grasped the social etiquette Adventurers' adhered to.

In the League of Freedom Towns Eastal, how one could convey gratitude was common sense. But for the nobility, who would give thanks by giving awards or by asking someone to kneel down to be knighted, giving their thanks to Adventurers was a complete mystery. To know how to dress or how to act for people you did not know was utterly impossible.

Since this was so, the dinner party was modeled to resemble what was popular as closely as possible. The food too was done in this fashion as apart from the food the palace chefs that came from Maihama made, half of the cuisine was from restaurants around Akiba. If such an event were held in Maihama palace, scandals like "they are making fools of their guests!" were bound to come up. Fortunately, it seemed that for Adventurers, such an event was alright.

Since the general direction of the party was plain to see, Raynesia saw no need to worry about anything whatsoever. To her, it served no purpose to get frazzled over things that hadn't even started yet, so she decided to laze about to pass the time. But it was an undeniable fact that Raynesia had such a disposition because she lived a life of indolence while avoiding people as much as possible.

However, the situation changed.

"This should be on the list— next, coupled with a jade necklace, please wait. Remember last year, you received a birthday gift in..."

Elissa's voice contained a hint of nervousness.

"You're right, I have to pay attention to status... right?"

It was all too sudden.

Raynesia received notice that the western merchant Lord Marvis was about to visit.

Lord Marvis was a merchant by trade, but was also an important member of Holy Empire Westelande's nobility. Although her family's standing was not inferior to his, she still could not afford to be careless. And judging from the timing of his visit, he was most definitely sent here by order of the palace.

(The rumors that the west had changed were certainly true.)

Raynesia bit her lip.

Of course, there was a good reason for her stress.

About 280 years ago, the Yamato archipelago was a single, unified country. Commonly called the ancient dynasty, the Westelande Imperial Dynasty was ruled by a royal family which dominated the whole archipelago by use of force.

But during the chaos incited by the Six Scrapped Princesses, the royal family came to ruin. Following its annihilation, the unified Yamato split apart after the power that was keeping it together was lost.

However, Yamato's current nobility continued the system of 'dynastic succession' used in the ancient dynasty. After the death of the royal family, being the core of the former social strata, Yamato's people were then ruled by the feudal lords that served the former Westelande Imperial Dynasty.

To the League of Freedom Towns Eastal, this fact was also very significant.

The title 'Duke' of the Corwens, Raynesia's family and one of only two dukedoms found in Yamato, was originally bestowed during the Westelande Imperial Dynasty. Likewise, the lords of the League of Freedom Towns Eastal inherited their 'right to rule' the People of the Land from their ancestors.

Of the areas of Yamato that were once under the Westelande Imperial Dynasty, the two most influenced, Holy Empire Westelande and the League of Freedom Towns Eastal, practically split the archipelago in two.

The Holy Empire Westelande had recognized the Itsuki clan as the successors to the Westelande Imperial Dynasty.

Even though Raynesia was not too familiar with history, she did know that the Itsuki clan was a "branch family" of the ancient dynasty's royal family. The origins of the Itsuki clan came about from a political sacrifice. As their clan had moved to Ise, they survived the destruction of the Westelande Imperial Dynasty.

Naturally, the Itsuki clan was put forward to be leaders of the Holy Empire Westelande as their name alone held a strong appeal to rulership, being the "legitimate successors" of the Westelande Imperial Dynasty.

However, not all of Yamato's nobility recognized the Itsuki clan as royalty. In fact, both Akiba and the League of Freedom Towns Eastal, to which Raynesia belonged to, did not acknowledge the Itsuki clan as their rightful rulers.

In the end, the Itsuki clan was only a branch of the royal bloodline.

Once the clan split from the bloodline, its title could not be reinstated.

Besides, if it only were a question of having royal lineage, then even the Corwen clan had royal blood in their veins through a number of political marriages as described by the records kept by the aristocracy.

With the way things were, the Corwen clan did not recognize the Itsuki clan as the successors to the royal bloodline. Having said that, the fact that they were still a branch family of the royal bloodline could not be taken lightly.

Under the hierarchical system of the previous Westelande Imperial Dynasty, the Itsuki clan outclassed the Corwen clan. From this political standpoint, even though both the eastern League of Freedom Towns Eastal and the western Holy Empire Westelande both branched out from the royal lineage, they always had a tense relationship.

This Lord Marvis person, the man that was sent here by the Holy Empire Westelande this time, was a highly ranked noble. Raynesia had once heard that he was the head of the merchant nobility and that he was in charge of maritime trade.

Although this dinner party was intended to improve relations with Adventurers, if this person wanted to drop by, they could not refuse him an invitation. He was not the kind of man that could be refused with a "maybe later, when we've got time".

Raynesia shook her head to clear her dark thoughts.

After all, both Lord Marvis and Raynesia were People of the Land, and by the culture left behind by the royal family in Yamato, they were both nobles.

Because of this, it could be said that they were of equal footing— meaning both needed to adhere to the norms of etiquette and culture high society demanded.

(At least...)

What she could do right now was do her duty, that was what Raynesia was thinking.

As a daughter of the Corwen clan in Akiba— called "Princess Raynesia". She felt that doing her best here was a way to repay Akiba for saving her home.

Raynesia stood up, with her snowy-white dress flowing with her.

Although she did not know the intentions of this noble from the west, she had decided to be the vanguard in this battle.

Part 3

"Hmm..."

"This is an attack. As they are using propaganda or psychological warfare, this is really leaving a bad taste in my mouth."

Shiroe sighed softly.

Aside from the taste, it was also incredibly bad mannered.

The intent of such actions was obvious.

This attack on Akiba by an unknown entity seemed to be an attempt to discredit the Round Table Council and to weaken the unity of the city. However, this approach was too crude.

Was it because of the "enemy's" incompetence? Or...

"... Or arrogance?"

Akatsuki turned her head upon hearing Shiroe muttering to himself.

He waved his hands hastily upon seeing the situation.

"It's nothing, put away your dagger."

"But, my lord..."

"You will have no opportunity to use that this time."

Akatsuki unwillingly hid the ice-cold weapon under her skirt. Shiroe averted his eyes from her thighs and looked at Henrietta.

"Akiba is under attack."

"Yes."

Henrietta gave a stiff, curt nod.

Seeing that Henrietta had already noticed, Shiroe decided it was best if he shared some information.

"Our enemies should be making use of the ruckus to spread rumors. They aim to undermine the authority of the Round Table Council."

"... We have to counter this quickly, maybe even stop the festival if necessary."

"That might not be the best strategy."

Shiroe calmly replied to Henrietta, who was hastily trying to find a solution.

"If we halt the festival, the public will doubt the Round Table Council's ability to handle emergencies, resulting in our loss of authority, and our enemies will have achieved their goal. Thus, the best thing we can do at this time is to reduce the number of disruptions to a minimum and to resolve them as well. The festival must continue."

"True... that makes sense."

Henrietta looked pale.

Being under the indirect attack of mysterious assailants had produced quite a bit of stress. And it was not as if Shiroe wasn't under the same amount of stress, but rather as Shiroe had a better grasp of the situation, he appeared calmer.

Shiroe's instincts told him that the People of the Land were behind this attack. There were numerous reasons for such an assumption, but his primary basis was the "intent to weaken the authority of the ruling organization".

Including Shiroe, Yamato's Adventurers were Japanese from the real world.

Not to sound boastful, but the Japanese saw no value in undermining the authority of its governing body. In fact, they viewed those in politics or in the police force as people who provided world-class service. If such organizations failed, it would only inconvenience them. So for most Japanese, they would rather leave these organizations to their own devices. So such notions as 'the Japanese government being incompetent is only natural' did not originate from the Japanese people themselves. In other words, Akiba's Adventurers, who were also Japanese, would not think of 'undermining the authority of the ruling organization'.

Furthermore, the unrefined manner of this attack provided another clue.

The People of the Land behind this would not expect this attack to physically harm Akiba's Adventurers. That was to be expected, as it would at most cause the failure of the festival and worsen the security of the city. It could only result in the criticism of the Round Table Council, but would not weaken the Adventurers themselves.

This level of attack wouldn't achieve their goal, even if that were to 'undermine the authority of the Round Table Council'. It should be viewed as merely a phase in their plan.

In that case, what was their real objective? And how would they benefit from it?

They probably wanted to use this chaos to get an advantage during negotiations with Akiba.

This should be the aim of the 'merchants from the west', as mentioned when Minori reported in via telepathy. Since the Round Table Council and the League of Freedom Towns Eastal signed an agreement,

naturally the People of the Land from the west also wanted the same to prevent the benefits from being monopolized. In order to achieve better terms and conditions, they conducted a preemptive strike.

If the mastermind were able to mobilize such a large number of merchants, then this person should be a merchant or noble who possessed quite a bit of wealth.

The only person who could fit this criteria had already entered the city beforehand, a conclusion Shiroe drew after confirming it with Isaac.

Shiroe could understand this.

According to the current situation, this attack was certainly effective.

However, Shiroe felt that if that were all there was, then it was too crude and inelegant.

They only gained a slight advantage in price negotiation through intimidation and gossiping after mobilizing so many people. That was the extent of their capability.

"So it's the west, huh..."

"Please keep it a secret for the moment."

Shiroe requested this of Henrietta after explaining it to her back at Crescent Moon Alliance's booth.

"I don't mind, Shiroe-sama, but what should we do next?"

"Hmm..."

Shiroe paused again.

Shiroe was one of the eleven founding members of the Round Table Council. However, it was mostly an autonomous organization that was trusted by Akiba's residents. If he acted alone, based on his own judgement... Shiroe broke his own train of thought.

He was dead-set that "there would be no easy solution."

(Seems like there is no need for bloodshed this time... since the foe is causing trouble with such arbitrary means, they should be prepared for our retaliation too.)

He also had this slightly reckless idea.

We might fight when beaten back, this was only right and proper. In this place, the cause and effect would be more severe than back home. No, he had to take the defensive; defending oneself was a right that needed no explanation.

"Of course we're going to fight back."

The out-of-place feeling Shiroe felt since yesterday's "chaos" cleared up after asking the Production Guild Liaison Committee. The number of cases they needed to handle had increased.

The disputes in the city and the minor incidents that escalated to quarrels were merely the tip of the iceberg. For example, they would split a request that normally took only one form into two, take up the staff's time by making them go through unnecessary paperwork, not pay the exact amount in taxes, and attempt to bribe the officials. When you looked at them separately, they were all trivial issues. But there was someone pushing these minor issues to their limits as a means to attack Akiba.

It was difficult for Adventurers to determine if such actions were malicious. But these silly contacts continued to accumulate, trying to bind the Production Guild Liaison Committee— and even the Round Table Council.

The enemy would mercilessly exploit this vulnerability.

Where were the "enemies" focusing their attack?

At this stage, they should be targeting the Production Guild Liaison Committee's administrative operations-related parts. City entrance, warehouse facilities, flea market inspections. Filing false or repeated reports focused on these businesses would overwhelm the administrative powers of the liaison committee.

The places where Adventurers or People of the Land were interacting were also targets. The enemy was attempting to spoil the festive mood by disrupting these venues.

To resolve these situations, they would have to "increase the number of staff". The focus was to establish an efficient and flexible organization.

The governing bodies headed by the Round Table Council were all formed by volunteers. Volunteers displayed problem-solving abilities above their usual level when their number and morale were high. But insufficient numbers would lead to fatigue, which in turn would deplete their morale. Without adequate coordination and direction, they would lose their way.

— We must reorganize the command system and deploy more manpower.

In addition, that alone would not be enough to stop any "follow up" attacks. If Shiroe was in their shoes, he would be ready to play his next card in hand to press the attack. Such a scheme would seriously undermine the administrative ability of the Round Table Council.

Shiroe calmly examined the situation.

(The battlefield is vast. Each individual attack is but a prick, barely worth mentioning... but the field of attack encompasses the entirety of Akiba. The sheer scope of things makes it impossible for me alone to handle. Even the help of Log Horizon would be insufficient. However, if I were to mobilize the Round Table Council, there are certain disadvantageous aspects. In fact, the enemy is probably waiting for this very move, so they can take advantage of the various vendor disputes and disrupt our position.)

The priority at the moment was to contact the appropriate people for assistance, but this had to be kept

within the upper management of the Round Table Council. This prevented panicking the public, which would then take more manpower to handle. The attack was directed towards the Round Table Council by overwhelming the Production Guild Liaison Committee with saturation attacks; hastily raising the alert level would make them fall into the enemy's trap.

(The best way, really, is to let this incident resolve itself...)

Shiroe started thinking of the possible outcomes.

He mentally created simulations of the deployment of combat power at hand. If one idea failed, he would change the conditions of the simulation. Shiroe stopped breathing, moving away from the murmur surrounding him, and the silence of the world enveloped him. He accelerated the simulation, trying to find the balance that had to exist somewhere.

Even the worried Akatsuki watching Shiroe had disappeared from his eyes.

Shiroe was so immersed in his thoughts that light and sound faded away from his senses.

However, there was nothing.

Shiroe was not good at dealing with an "enemy" that used such attacks.

The "enemy" seemed to lack a master strategy. The commander's purpose should be broadly understood as a whole, but each attack was almost always a type of "live" action. The assault was not based around a single point of careful strategy, but was rather about finding opportunities to make random attacks.

They could only know about the attack after the enemy had already finished preparations and initiated the offensive. Shiroe, who used preparation as a weapon, was bad at countering such tactics.

(Well wow, I hate this kind of opponent.)

Even though Shiroe had requested Akatsuki and the others to engage the enemy, the situation was in fact much more complicated and frustrating than he had imagined. It was impossible to predict an enemy that would randomly regroup and attack targets of opportunity. If the enemy had instead chosen to focus their energy on a single point, their location could have been calculated, and defenders could gather to fortify the position. It would have been possible for a small group of defenders to repel a much larger army. This time, however, the enemy had chosen to simultaneously attack everywhere at once. Moreover, the enemy "agents" didn't necessarily bear any malicious intent, and were merely pawns being utilized by the enemy. Shiroe was thus unable to properly interpret and anticipate the various movements of the enemy groups.

(This time, there is no other way but to give up.)

Shiroe switched to another point of view.

He gave up on dealing with all the conditions.

(Some things simply cannot be done. With this in mind, we should focus instead on what we can do.)

It was now past noon, so there was not enough time to remedy the situation. If no countermeasures were deployed within the next hour, the situation would deteriorate so much that it would become obvious to the citizens.

In this situation, you had to find out what you could do to fight the "enemy"...

"Huh, isn't it Shiro-senpai? So you were at Crescent Moon's booth, that makes sense."

Shiroe turned to look and spotted his friend, West Wind Brigade's Soujiro, at the back of the crowd. Today, Soujiro was wearing a deep blue floral hakama, with his hair tied into a short ponytail and carrying two swords around his waist.

"It's been a while." "Afternoon!" "Greetings, this is the first time we've met." "Who's this?" "It's Log Horizon's..." "Yaaay!"

A chorus of greetings, bright and melodious, rang forth from the girls accompanying Soujiro.

"I went to the cake store Senpai recommended. Their service was amazing! They brought out sixteen full cakes for me. I couldn't quite finish, so I found a couple guild mates to assist me. As more of us arrived, they kept bringing us more and more cakes! Such warmth and kindness... Ah, eh?"

Shiroe felt his legs go weak, almost causing him to collapse on the spot.

That wasn't service, that's just increasing the cake count to match the number of people per the competition rules!

The retort almost made its way out of Shiroe's mouth, but was restrained at the last moment. Soujiro remained completely oblivious.

"They ran out of stock after bringing out 30 cakes, but everyone enjoyed them. Oh, I like the orange mousse cake, it has a great taste, tastes like summer on the finish."

(Ah ah, really, Soujiro, this guy...)

Even though Shiroe felt weak, Soujiro had "avenged" his humiliation, and he put a hand on Soujiro's shoulder.

"Shiro-sempai? What's the matter?"

"I'm fine, Soujiro, come, there's something suitable for you to handle."

The enemy was fighting a secret war with saturation attacks, but was not following the usual rules and regulations of saturation combat.

In this case, "unintentional", which was better than "lawless", would be the most suitable line of defense.

The best candidate to fight was right in front of Shiroe.

Part 4

Minori clenched her fist after ending her telepathy call.

Her fears had come true.

Akiba—Minori and her friends were under attack.

"You're certain of this?"

Minori nodded in response to Charasin, who was taken aback.

"Shiroe-san also shares this view."

Charasin bit his nails with a serious expression on his face while reviewing the document, and then started thinking about it once again.

Minori had been in this office for nearly eight hours, almost never taking a break since morning from the continuous process. Most of the mountain of documents had disappeared, now compressed into wooden file boxes in the corner of the room.

They had started to get a hold of the situation.

The reports were dispersed to avoid detection, but the number of Western merchants exceeded 15% of the total number of participants.

The quantity was not the issue. The problem was, that 15% was causing more than 60% of the storm.

This room served as the command center for the Libra Festival.

Gathered here were prior and subsequent intelligence reports.

Using "reports" was a mistake from the start. The multitude of different "reports" was overwhelming the administrative process.

Of course, documents were very important.

Keeping records was the iron rule in administrative work, and in this world, it could only be done on paper.

The Production Guild Liaison Committee, though, had an overwhelmingly inadequate processing power. If they stuck to the level of detail they had originally planned, they would ultimately fail in consolidating the reports. While they also lacked experience in doing this, the main culprit was the lack of manpower.

This became a window the other side could exploit.

Some examples included the simple survey of goods that were brought in, the permit to sell at the flea market, the paperwork authorizing the sale of merchandise, the documents for renting the common warehouse of the Round Table Council, the permit to withdraw goods on site. There was a shortage of on-site staff everywhere.

Delays caused by pressure, the pressure caused a storm.

This jumble, caused by People of the Land, was much more than expected, leading to the inevitable—that was the unintended result. In other words, they did not expect this clutter, which was also the responsibility of the liaison committee. Charasin was reflecting on this.

But after organizing the reports, the actual situation was clear. Western merchants were deliberately complicating the administrative procedure with repeated applications.

A person or a group was trying to increase the burden on the system.

Charasin confirmed that the guilds responsible for patrolling the city, D.D.D and the Black Sword Knights, were at their limit dealing with the rapid increase of quarrels and disputes, while voices criticizing the Round Table Council of incompetence began to rise.

With things having escalated to such a degree, Charasin told Minori to contact Shiroe so that there would be no gaps in information, which would result in their disadvantage.

Minori's prediction was unfortunately supported by Shiroe's report.

"Minori-chan, will you go back to Shiroe-dono?"

She had expected Charasin to ask this question, and shook her head "no" as she planned.

"I am not going back to Shiroe-san."

"Ah?"

"I want to stay here."

Minori stressed this once again.

Charasin's look of dismay, too, was as expected.

When groups were under attack, they tended to gather at the leader's side. This was the defensive instinct of both humans and animals, and even guilds too.

In these kinds of situations, members would gather next to the guild master to wait for instructions, this was the general concept of coping. This was the rule of thumb for joining guilds. When being subjected unilaterally by an unidentified social aggression, like right now, most guild masters, like Charasin, had just issued instructions, and members had been summoned to the guild hall.

Moreover, since Minori was still young, Charasin believed that she should return to Shiroe's protective

wings.

But instead, Minori decided to stay here.

Her document-organizing capabilities were on the level of an administrative officer's. Of course, the 8th District Shopping Center had several such members that worked in the background, but seeing how Minori virtually "eradicated" the clutter in the office, he could not refuse her decision to stay.

Minori deliberately pretended not to see Charasin's worried look, and took a deep breath.

This here was her battleground.

From her perspective, these documents and this office seemed to be other things.

Information in her consciousness naturally switched to form a new image.

(In other words, use the same approach as before.)

The problem was "dealing with an insufficient processing capability".

It was the same idea as "having an insufficient healing capacity".

Minori could recollect the chilling, murderous, and suffocating tension. Slowly, she relaxed her clenched hands, her body resuming the blood circulation. That's right, she could imagine this as a raid battle.

Looking back, her throat became dry, her body cooling down.

Use the same approach as in Ragranda, Choushi, and Sand Leaf. Imitate what Shiroe did, follow in his footsteps.

"I'll stay here and deal with the warehouse work. Can all the warehouse documents be moved over here?"

"Huh? Ah, ah, oh, that is... if you're willing to help, I am of course very grateful."

Charasin gave instructions to the youth beside him, Taro.

This so-called warehouse was the Round Table Council's managed materials storage. Small-and medium-sized guilds could rent the warehouse space for a small fee. This was established during the Round Table Council's creation.

After the Catastrophe changed the world, material quality would affect the finished product's quality. So for producers, identifying which materials were good or bad to purchase became very important.

Before, if the item name was 'tomato', regardless of what 'tomato' was used, the quality of the finished dish was the same— but of course, it all just tasted like moist crackers. Now, if an inferior 'tomato' was used, a tomato salad would be of poor-quality, and it would just become disgusting food. It was therefore increasingly necessary to check the quality of items personally before a purchase.

This gave a need to improve the management system of large warehouses. Large guilds could use their personal large-scale warehouses, but small-and medium-sized guilds couldn't. In response to this, the Round Table Council set up several large warehouses and was responsible for their management.

During the Libra Festival, these warehouses were also open to the People of the Land.

For example, a People of the Land with over-laden carriages would need such services. Among their products, much of it wouldn't be able to be placed in the hotel's warehouse, or were bulky items. Some high-level items required special storage, like Tianjin Winter Clothes, which were made by elves and needed a refrigerated warehouse, or else it would be nearly impossible to maintain its freshness.

But by opening their use to the People of the Land, the process itself had become complicated, and this was a fact. All of the goods must be kept in a detailed list, or they could not be held responsible. In addition to the usage of the warehouse, they had originally speculated that a fixed amount would be taken out every morning, and in the evening the leftovers would be stored; they hadn't planned on letting businesses withdraw goods whenever they clinched a deal.

Frankly speaking, such a burden far exceeded the processing capacity of the operational window— which was how Akiba came under attack, the most illustrative example.

"Minori, sorry to keep you waiting."

"Ah, Tohya."

Tohya went into the office without a word, Minori nodded to acknowledge him.

Communication between these twins was unique. Because of their constant calls to reach each other, it could be made subconsciously to each other, and was more like true telepathy that communicated through thoughts alone.

"Charasin-san, I'm here to help, I'm her twin brother Tohya."

"Ah, ah, long time no see. Sorry to trouble you, thanks for helping."

"Got it. Then Minori, I'll be back."

After Tohya's simple greeting, he simply dropped the backpack and left the office. Minori didn't ask where he was going.

Various warehouse goods were definitely kept on this floor somewhere. As he said to Charasin, Tohya was going to get these custody orders.

The documents would soon be moved into the office at twice the speed. The flea market reports and custody orders would also be brought here.

After cleaning up the current space in this office, they would have to deal with the parallel processing of large amounts of documents.

This was the battlefield that Minori had chosen.

"Charasin-san, these are also for you."

As Minori was sorting the documents, the more important ones were passed to Charasin. Written in red on the top right-hand corner of the file was "urgent". He was somewhat puzzled, but nodded his head quickly after inspecting it.

Charasin himself was a guild master whose practical abilities were highly regarded by Shiroe. Even keeping track of supplies, such as potatoes being "taken out multiple times", which Minori could not handle, were easy for him by using short telepathy calls. This could calm the waters and compensate for damages.

Minori was convinced of this.

At this moment, rushing back to Shiroe was not a good approach.

When the battlefield was in danger of collapsing, the rear guard needed to support the front line defense. The healers had the obligation to trust the vanguards.

(Although I'm not sure if I can be of any help...)

But at this moment, this office lacked manpower; the only people present were Charasin and two 8th District Shopping Center volunteers, plus Minori and Tohya.

—Even if it were the Libra Festival, the core staff only numbered at five people.

Shiroe had only instructed that she and Tohya "meet up".

Minori pondered over the hidden intentions behind these words.

Minori's initial feeling about Shiroe's message was that "Akiba is now faced with a situation that is not directly causing physical harm". If it progressed into a dangerous situation, and Shiroe should order to meet him against all odds, she would certainly go to him if necessary.

But after feeling at ease, she felt as though the message was giving her the permission to act freely.

It wasn't simply giving her permission to act freely. Akiba was being attacked. In effect, she was allowed freedom of movement, which she interpreted as Shiroe looking to her to take action.

He was giving her a small expectation from afar.

Perhaps this was just a misunderstanding, but it was enough to make Minori get fired up.

(However, if this really is the case... even if it's only for a little bit, if I can't meet Shiroe-sama's expectations, I...)

I would like to imitate Shiroe in this office.

Minori came to this decision.

Reproduce Shiroe's full battlefield control.

While having two Shiroes in the same place was meaningless, if there were no Shiroe here, then imitating him might be of relevance.

The People of the Land counter staff were the vanguard tanks. Charasin, who was solving the problem using the time they brought, was the healer in this case.

Prioritizing the issues at hand was of utmost importance, predicting how things will progress. Sorting the intelligence allows things to move smoothly, this was what Minori was "giving her all" to achieve.

(I cannot become the vanguard or the healer.)

Despite the lofty ideals, she had only organized the documents, copying the content to other paper collations. Minori herself felt a kind of fire burning inside her underlying the sense of helplessness and irritability, but she tried freezing such sentiments.

She was a middle school student, and incompetence was a matter of course.[\[7\]](#)

In these cases, blaming oneself and self-abusive behavior was useless on the battlefield, which was Shiroe's teachings. Minori did not want to go contrary to Shiroe's expectations.

'—Don't read the flow, but rather, 'become' the flow.'

Minori recollected Shiroe's gentle, half-joking voice.

(Be the flow...)

For the current Minori, the so-called fighting with the flow of files one after another, that was moved in a series, as well as through a series of contact whispers waiting for instructions. She wanted to turn into something like this.

No worrying.

No thinking.

Turning herself 'into' the document itself, turning herself 'into' a solution.

Minori chased after the vague feeling of contact as she focused on the task at hand.

Part 5

The venue for the dinner party was shrouded by a luxurious atmosphere.

This was where Raynesia resided, on the entire first floor of the "Water Maple Consulate". The "Water Maple Consulate" was where Raynesia was posted when she came to Akiba, which was purchased by the Cohen duke of Maihama and one of the many buildings that were redeveloped.

Originally, it was almost in ruins, with only the basic structure of the building remaining. Now, it had been converted into a People of the Land aristocratic style mansion.

This was a Consulate in outer appearance only, as it offered accommodations for visitors, and was also often used to conduct meetings or to examine local products and other practical work. So even though it was Raynesia's private residence in name, it was of considerable size. It had three large halls, a total of 80 rooms, and more than 30 regular staff.

The Consulate would be holding the grandest of the events—the dinner party. The number of staff increased, as the usual 30 people would be unable to cope. More chefs from Maihama had arrived, there weren't enough bards or waiters, and there was urgent recruitment of kitchen staff from Akiba professionals; it was a large-scale mobilization of many people.

In fact, the staff was not limited to People of the Land.

Although there were few, some Adventurers joined to cook, serve food, entertain or work behind the scenes. Adventurers had high income levels; Raynesia was using the People of the Land as a benchmark for salary so she never thought Adventurer applicants would come, but this was Akiba, there were Adventurers that 'were interested' and a 'join in on the fun' mentality that applied.

Probably from a sense of obligation, these Adventurers were even busy working behind the scenes of this gorgeous banquet, working side-by-side with People of the Land of the opposite gender and got to know each other, establishing somewhat adorable relationships and having the opportunity to talk to each other.

"Thank you very much."

Raynesia gave a sweet smile to the nearest Adventurer that greeted her. The young Adventurer looked cold and indifferent while looking away, but still quietly replied, this was how it should be.

The boy participated in the Sand Leaf campaign, working in support and siege warfare. Raynesia could only be grateful, so she made this event, the dinner party that would be held today, in order to thank them.

"Thanks to everyone's support, Maihama and the League of Freedom Towns were saved, please accept my eternal gratitude."

Raynesia curtsied to show her appreciation.

The young man waved for her to stop, hurriedly telling her that "This isn't worth your thanks, we are Adventurers and something like that is our natural duty... it was a simple task."

The youth blushed, blurting out "Don't mind me, please don't!" as he left in a rush.

"I think all of them are very pure."

"Correct... that is so."

Raynesia replied to Elissa behind her.

Adventurers—especially the young ones, seemed to be mostly reserved people. Most Knights were also romantic, but they were inevitably too invested in 'Chivalry' and forced their own values upon others.

In this respect, the young Adventurers often fled in panic when Raynesia thanked them.

When Raynesia had first encountered this, she thought that she was hated or marginalized, but she now understood that it wasn't like that. While in the League of Freedom Towns Eastal, she was called the "sorrowful beautiful princess" and people treated her as decoration and enjoyed her beauty. In Akiba, it appeared to be similar; however, there was a different type of admiration.

Adventurers would get embarrassed.

Elissa would say with a smile, "Goodness, they're all shy like children," but Raynesia didn't think that was bad. Compared to awkward flattery, this type of attitude gave her a more favorable impression, making her smile.

The consulate had room for about 300 guests.

Two-thirds were Adventurers, the rest were People of the Land. The People of the Land included in this were a wide array of merchants and executives running the city bank. Also present for the celebrations were the heads of the Chambers of Commerce and Trade.

The lobby was filled with a very appetizing aroma.

The dinner party was intended to provide a venue for everyone to mingle and chat, but it was important for the dishes to be perfect; chefs from Maihama came to show their talents to Raynesia, making various luxury dishes, as if to show off to Akiba's Adventurers.

Among those dishes were fish soup and beef with raspberry sauce, examples of "redeveloped" dishes. These were Sand Leaf's traditional dishes prior to the revolution, when goods were still produced through the synthesis menu.

Bland-tasting food was now but a hazy memory, the feeling of chewing on rubber dishes had left a gloomy impression, surprising since that sort of flavor could not truly be considered food.

But after the Revolution, there were many dishes that were no longer like this. The crafting menu showed the list of necessary items to make synthesis goods, and by extension the ingredients needed to make food;

however, knowledge of the recipe was required in order to make the finished product have the same appearance as the synthesis menu dishes.

The Catastrophe exposed the People of the Land's ignorance. They knew how twisted the situation was, that synthetic menu items couldn't be crafted by hand. But brave chefs from Maihama tried to use the ingredients on the list and strived to turn the unknown cooking methods into actual local food.

Although it was hard to tell, today's guests seemed to be satisfied. Raynesia traveled throughout the venue, introducing People of the Land to Adventurers and Adventurers to People of the Land.

So far, the dinner party could be called a great success and everything looked great. As Raynesia's grandfather Duke Corwen said, Adventurers' bonds with the People of the Land would become the great treasure of Eastal.

Raynesia thought so as well.

But this was the value of the bonds they made, everyday to polish and refine the ability to welcome the result. Raynesia thought that their duty was to foster this budding relationship.

This should be the reason her grandfather posted her in Akiba.

But she just wanted to be a sloth and laze around all day.

"Princess..."

"What is it, Elissa?"

Behind Raynesia stood her maid, taking advantage of the brief gap between guest arrivals to grab Raynesia's attention. She looked unwell; she probably heard some bad news from the maid who whispered in Elissa's ears just now.

Fearing bad news, Raynesia mentally braced herself.

She was already prepared for this when she knew of Marvis' intention to visit.

Raynesia had not seen Marvis at the dinner party. She had yet to receive news of his arrival, which implied the bad news would be about him.

"There is bad news."

"... Although I dread it, please tell me."

"Lord Marvis will reach the lobby in about 10 minutes."

"I see."

That was as expected.

Even though this information didn't sit well with her, this was not to the extent of being bad news.

"Then..."

"What's wrong?"

Raynesia pretended to be calm and urged her to go on.

"The thing is, Lord Marvis came with a ship to Akiba port filled with a lot of goods that he would like to move into the warehouse, but..."

"What is the problem?"

"It was too sudden, coupled with the large amount of goods he is carrying—the rental warehouse is a service intended for the Adventurers' use."

Elissa responded in a troubled tone.

This was within her expectation. If any problems occurred, Raynesia was obligated to help Marvis. Her job was to serve as a bridge between the People of the Land and the Adventurers.

At this time, the noise in the venue picked up.

A large number of envoys had probably arrived, most likely Marvis', and it was too late for Raynesia to hear any reports.

Raynesia brought Elissa along, Adventurers standing on the side greeted her, and the orchestra was playing while she was walking across the hall. A middle-aged aristocrat walked through the door.

Raynesia had never met him before, but this man was definitely the Holy Empire Westelande aristocrat—Marvis.

"We are honored by your presence."

Raynesia gently lifted her skirt, and gave a curtsy.

Raynesia held a unique position in the People of the Land's aristocratic society. She was the daughter of the greatest noble clan in the East. Her beauty earned her the name of 'Rose Princess' in the social world, and was truly the envy of all people.

Nevertheless, she was a woman. In aristocratic society, women could not engage in foreign affairs.

Raynesia was living in Akiba as a part of her duties, bridging the gap between the People of the Land and Adventurers, providing all kinds of cooperation opportunities. But the official reason she was here was as a punishment for "Seeking help from Adventurers without the consent of the League of Freedom Towns Eastal."

She was the representative of the East for People of the Land, stationed in Akiba, but had no official

position. She was merely 'the daughter of the Corwen clan who is grounded as punishment'. Hence, she had to show deep respect for the grand noble Marvis from the Holy Empire Westelande.

"Wow, really beautiful. If my memory is correct, you are the daughter of the Corwen clan, Princess Raynesia, right?"

"Yes, Marvis-sama. Thank you for visiting tonight, and for honoring us with your presence at this Autumn Celebration."

Raynesia hid her emotions perfectly, and elegantly bowed her head.

To tell the truth, she had a lousy impression of him.

It was downright terrible. Marvis looked like he was made of white clay. Raynesia had accompanied her grandfather several times visiting nobles of the Holy Empire Westelande, feeling repulsed by them every time. Marvis was no different.

Having an ancient aristocratic culture, the Holy Empire Westelande was more conservative than the East, even the men wore perfume and lipstick. Some were suitable for this, but from the League of Freedom Towns Eastal's point of view, it was an outdated custom.

Raynesia was not interested in finding faults with others' appearances, but with Marvis, the problem was not so much with his appearance, but with his personality.

"It appears to be exceptionally lively, really a wonderful event."

"Yes, this is thanks to the good fortune you brought."

However, being noble-born, Princess Raynesia had the accumulated experience of a thousand conversations with various officials and diplomats. Even if it were with someone she could not stand, she would still be able to effortlessly converse with them while wearing a faint smile on her lips. Such was the foremost skill required of any child born of nobility.

"However, how should I put this... I can't help but feel it is a bit too disorderly."

"What do you mean?"

Hearing the disdain in the noble's voice, Raynesia raised an eyebrow.

"Nothing... for nobles and peasants to attend the same banquet, this must be the guts of the East that inherited the blood of barbarians, hahaha... really, I already gave hints not to come near me, shoo shoo."

"I am very sorry, we of the East are not well-versed with such customs, that's why the dance party was held in this form. I do not know if it will fit your tastes, but would you be willing to taste this wine from the East?"

This kind of statement of contempt was not something you can get used to, nor was it easy to ignore. The League of Freedom Towns Eastal was comprised mostly of lands conquered by the Westelande Dynasty during its formation. The nobles of the Holy Empire Westelande from Nakasu had always viewed this place as a barbaric zone since the days of the Westelande Dynasty.

In comparison, Ezzo was seen as a barren and sparsely populated place, looked down on as uncivilized brutes. Ezzo called itself an empire after gaining independence, the hostility from the central countries also spanned from this.

Raynesia tilted her head slightly, pouring wine for the overdressed Mavis. Mavis looked dreamily at her, slit-eyed, and suddenly touched her silver hair.

A wave of anger flared up around her.

It came from the Adventurers closest to them. A young warrior in armor holding a glass of wine and a samurai with his blade sheathed at his waist glared with looks that could kill.

Their eyes conveyed the message: "Want us to slaughter this pig?" Their concern made Raynesia smile.

The Adventurers were free like the birds. Raynesia was really glad to understand how they felt.

But Raynesia declined their silent proposition with her eyes. Some proposals were too kind for her to accept graciously. It would be bad if the noble of the west got hurt, and Raynesia was expecting this level of harassment from people like him.

If Raynesia didn't handle this well, this noble would be kicked out at best, or slain on the spot at worst. For both the east and the west, as well as the People of the Land and Adventurers, that would be an unfortunate outcome.

If he just wanted to mock her, she was ready to take it in stride.

Raynesia held this view.

It stemmed from her laziness. She was confident enough to ignore all the words she heard and kept herself on the verge of yawning. But she was also prepared for Elissa's lecture after all that.

"Eh, all right princess, please prepare the warehouse with haste. The goods I brought this time includes ingredients from the sea, it must be kept fresh."

"I understand. I will make the arrangements, please wait for it in the meantime."

Raynesia bowed her head and acknowledged his request.

But Mavis interrupted Raynesia with a disdainful expression.

"Ha! Princess, what are you saying? I have already sent in the documents beforehand. A copy has already

been sent to Maihama's Duke Sergead, and I already received a reply."

"Eh?"

"You have already prepared for this, correct? We are bringing in top notch merchandise, fit for the Itsuki clan of the Holy Empire. It is not something you can leave lying around, understand?"

CHAPTER.

LIBRA FESTIVAL

[天 秤 祭]

▶ NAME: AKATSUKI

▶ AGE: 20

▶ WEAPON: DEVOTION

▶ SPECIALITY: FLYING KNEE (KICK)

▶ BIRTHDAY: JULY 7

▶ FAVORITE FOOD: DORAYAKI

▶ ITEM 1:

[LIGHT PURPLE TWO-FT LONG-SLEEVED KIMONO]

A LIGHT PURPLE, SMALL LONG-SLEEVED KIMONO WITH THE REFRESHING PATTERNS OF SCATTERED CHINESE BELLFLOWERS. AN ORIGINAL PRODUCT OF <KIMONO SHOP KOMACHI>, A PRODUCTION GUILD BASED IN AKIBA. KIMONO SHOP KOMACHI IS RARE IN THE FACT THAT IT PRODUCES TRADITIONAL JAPANESE CLOTHING SUCH AS KIMONOS AND SUCH IN THE WORLD OF ELDER TALE.



▶ ITEM 2:

[VERMILLION LIPSTICK]

A LIGHT RED LIPSTICK, NOT IN A "TUBE FORM", BUT IN THE TRADITIONAL PAINT FORM APPLIED (BY SPREADING IT ON THE LIPS) WITH THE FINGERS. ALTHOUGH THERE ARE BRIGHTER AND MORE VIVID SHADES, THIS IS THE LIMIT OF AKATSUKI'S TOLERANCE.



▶ ITEM 3:

[WIND CHIME OF THE WIND DRAGON]

A FURNITURE TYPE ITEM CREATED BY <ANTIQUIE>, A GUILD OF ARTISANS. THE PAPER AT THE BOTTOM THAT CATCHES THE WIND IS FORMED FROM THE SCALES OF A WIND DRAGON. AKATSUKI USES THIS WIND CHIME AS A DOORBELL.





〈ピッケル〉
採掘の道具にして
『ピッケルのようなもの』
の仲間。

Part 1

"No, you can't force it this way."

"Please queue up orderly!"

"I have received your documents. Yes, Okay."

The sweet voices sounded out harmoniously.

Elder Tales was a game, so the characters in it were either beautiful cute ladies or handsome stylish men.

Hence, if a certain number of women gathered in one place, especially if they were Adventurers, it would be a beautiful sight. But this was even more elegant than that.

This was the countermeasure HQ set up near the entrance of the exhibition lobby for this emergency. Shiroe was sighing silently inside.

This was not the first time he saw ladies working hard for Soujirou. They say that 'Women in love are more beautiful', and it was true. Shiroe explained it as the blushing cheeks, watery eyes, and the gentle expressions made them more charming.

But Soujirou's followers... they called themselves his personal guards... did not stop at that. They seemed to have heart signs floating all over their bodies, and this aura was reflected in their voice which sounded sweet as honey.

(It is super effective.)

Shiroe surveyed the area with a dull expression.

The young ladies with blue armbands were maintaining order all over the place, even witnessing the deals between People of the Land merchants and Adventurers, giving them advice.

Their movements were swift and smooth, it felt like they had went through hundreds of hours of training.

But it was impossible for them to go through so many hours of training.

These were the real skills the personal guards of Soujirou possessed, who took a lot of effort from Shiroe in convincing them to help. Although you couldn't tell from their looks, they were a highly organized group.

And their telepathy network was ever-increasing.

From what Shiroe knew, West Wind Brigade which had Soujirou as its guild master has about 30 odd members. But the number of girls in this event was more than 50.

"Tactician Shiroe."

The neat-looking young lady greeted Shiroe.

It seemed like Shiroe assumed the tactician position out of nowhere. This was because Soujirou instructed 'When you reach the place, listen to Shiroe-senpai's orders'.

"5 more people have arrived, they can form a team and move out."

Shiroe knew she was competent and experienced from this concise report.

Only the core members of large guilds like 'Silver Swords' or 'Army Bikes' could match her.

"Ah..."

Shiroe thought about how to say this.

Even though this was his battle plan, he knew how complicated his expression must seem.

"Where is Soujirou?"

"Yes. Sou-sama♥ is in the lobby date... patrolling, escorted by the 4th team."

Shiroe calculated the time as he looked out the window. It was about time to move to the next phase.

"Contact Soujirou and ask him to return to the countermeasures HQ and link up with the 5th team. Then proceed on a 45-minute patrol mission in the lobby. The 4th team will take over the duties of the 5th, which is guarding the HQ and manning the counters... Also, form the newcomers into teams of 3 and detail them to the city zone patrol."

"Roger. I, I, I..."

"?"

The young lady's face turned red, making Shiroe moody.

"We, the 5th, will patrol with Sou-sama as per Tactician Shiroe's orders!"

This announcement made several of the personal guards who were peeking here squeal in joy.

The girls muttered 'Together with Sou-sama!' 'It's my first time!' 'What should I do, my panties are not cute enough!' these words that were full of points to retort. Their eyes were no longer just watery, they were becoming heart-shaped.

Their assumption was spot on.

Shiroe's plan this round used the patrol (dating) with Soujirou as bait to draw in volunteers to help.

Soujirou would slowly patrol the clothing exhibition with 3 or 4 girls. With the instructions to take it slow, this was actually a date. Soujirou had been authorized to buy gifts for the girls with a budget of 20

gold for each of them. The money was sponsored by the Round Table Council.

When Shiroe had a flash of brilliance and came up with this idea, he thought: "This is an excellent plan!" But he retorted at the same time: "Will this kind of tactic actually work?" But from the results, it was super effective.

Although Shiroe did not know the details, Soujirou's personal guards were united like steel (proclaimed by the girl he was conversing with). According to her, from Soujirou's secretary to the newcomers, they had a pyramid-like command structure. They used this structure to form teams flexibly, handling all the disputes in the area by themselves.

Even when Soujirou was walking the streets slowly with a team, the other 6 parties were also patrolling the area, being prepared for any emergency. Shiroe instructed them to not hesitate to contact him if things got out of hand. They could also intimidate the merchants by telling them to take the matters to the Round Table Council.

Shiroe was at high alert in the beginning, worrying about the People of the Land spies or merchants escalating issues despite all this. But the People of the Land could not bring themselves to do that when facing these alluring ladies, and things had calmed down.

The girls had surprising motives.

The look in their eyes literally changed as they carried out their patrol duties orderly and seriously. They handled situations honestly and tactfully, showing no flaws. They might be able to get closer to Soujirou if they volunteered for this, that was what they were imagining. Soujirou appeared in front of them quite often and took different groups on patrol, motivating them to work harder.

Since Soujirou might see them at any moment, their attitudes were careful and respectful. They were like loving cats as they focused on acting their role of a cute girl, but Shiroe could feel the aura of a tiger from them.

Unlike the motivated girls high on adrenaline, Shiroe's spirit was at rock bottom. He didn't envy Soujirou and didn't want to build a harem. But seeing such an obvious difference would make any man moody.

Soujirou was an outstanding young man. Mature, gentle, polite, and reliable in battle. He also had a goofy side, tickling your desire to protect him... Shiroe understood what they were describing. Because back in the Debauchery Tea Party, Saki and Nazuna spent lots of time explaining why Soujirou was so charming to them.

Even so, Shiroe still didn't get it.

(Is that all it takes to be so popular?)

The pop idol status of Soujirou made people doubt whether this was some kind of spell. They were envious, but unable to suppress their anger... It was so unfathomable. Shiroe mumbled to himself.

"Tactician-dono, this is the first time we've met. We have been detailed to, eh, 16? That's right, the 16th team."

Shiroe looked at the happy young lady standing at attention in front of him, confirming his unfathomable feelings again.

(Why are such girls being mass-produced? Love is so mysterious. How should I put this, those popular with the opposite sex are geniuses at some level, but they are dangerous too.)

Shiroe recalled how Soujiro was.

A handsome youth who looked frail but loved to battle, with nothing to complain about as a friend. Since they were playing games together, they should be friends, but it was a bit different from the female perspective.

"Understood. Teams 9 to 18 will carry out zone security duties."

"Zone security? Sounds like a special police force!"[\[8\]](#)

The young lady was happy about something while Shiroe nodded gently. Shiroe understood that he must not retort or resist such women who had this sort of emotion.

"Hmmm, ah, my lord."

Akatsuki called out. Her gaze shifted between Shiroe and the Crescent Moon Alliance stall. Her awkward expression probably came from the clothes she was wearing.

"What is it?"

"Erm... want to participate? We promised to go on stage right?"

Akatsuki reminded Shiroe of the agreement.

Now that she mentioned it, he'd made a promise with Henrietta to go on stage to market their merchandise. Shiroe was in charge of miscellaneous jobs and was an extra in the line up, Akatsuki was the main character they were counting on. The old-world fashion clothing Akatsuki wore with Henrietta's help should be used for the purpose of displaying on stage.

But Akiba was under attack right now.

They really had no time to do this.

"My lord is going to keep his word right...?"

"That is correct..."

(Hold it... Maybe not?)

Shiroe adjusted his glasses and thought.

The intention of the enemy was to overwhelm the administrative capability of the Round Table Council

with their saturation attack, causing loss of confidence and even internal strife. To counter that, they should keep the schedule of Libra festival as close to their plan as possible. Shiroe had been thinking that way, but was now considering changing this policy slightly.

(Outsiders won't know what our schedule is like. If it looks like a success, some ad-lib performance should be fine.)

When Shiroe thought about this, his freedom of action increased drastically.

He stopped breathing, moving the chess pieces in his mind with the timetable in his heart. His own moves and other players' counter moves. Strictly classifying data he had and information to be confirmed, gradually filling the chessboard.

Shiroe was not a god, so he could not see most of the situations. But every move in chess would give more than the expected amount of information, as if the enemy were exposing their crude plans with their arrogant actions.

For creatures like humans, they could not accomplish anything without leaving their footsteps behind.

Adding in this supplementary data, the unseen chessboard slowly surfaced.

The hard work of the citizens, the honest attitude on-site. With the festive atmosphere as the background, all kinds of groups made power plays around the city of Akiba.

Shiroe thought that there were countless chess players of his level in this world. For him, this was a way to sound out his thoughts to himself. There were tons of situations he could not handle.

Shiroe contacted Krusty and Isaac, asking them to clamp down on violent incidents within Akiba. Other pieces he could move had already been activated. Keeping to the policy of keeping the incidents below the table, all the scenes were managed by volunteers. But the famous major guilds in Akiba would join in to handle the situation, gathering powerful players all over the chessboard.

Right now, Shiroe was unable to take on the enemies' movements alone, so he asked Soujirou for aid. His personal guards advanced to the front line facing the merchants that were causing trouble, solving problems like exiling people. This was an ability Shiroe didn't have.

It also helped in another area.

Shiroe recalled his petite companion's telepathy call from the Production Guild Liaison Committee.

Shiroe could feel her tender but determined fingers. Although it was still small and vague, Shiroe could see the image of a young bird chirping, spreading its wings for its first flight.

Charasin's processing speed increased and the incoming issues were falling drastically. This was thanks to the patrol sent by Isaac to nip the trouble in the bud, earning time for Soujirou's personal guards to remedy the outstanding problems.

They regained control of the situation faster than expected.

It was still early, but Shiroe could already see the ending. He was ready to activate the next plan.

Shiroe noticed the word 'freedom' as he recalled Akatsuki's words. He thought about which chess pieces he could move without disrupting the Libra Festival timetable and make the event even more lively.

The enemy was increasing the burden on the system and spreading rumors. Their objective was to lower the unity of Akiba as a whole, so others would think 'Akiba is no big deal'. It had nothing to do with facts, just an attack on the psychological level. The best way to counterattack was to make the Libra Festival even more lively, increasing the satisfaction of all participating to its peak.

"... My lord?"

Shiroe heard Akatsuki's worried voice, lifted his head and smiled at her. It was a smile Henrietta described as 'black hearted'.

"Ah! Akatsuki? Please ask Henrietta to prepare the costumes. Also ask the neighboring guild for help, try to come up with a set of clothes that will make people's nose bleed."

"Ah?"

"Teams 9 to 18!"

"Here!"

The members in the vicinity responded immediately and Shiroe stood up and declared fearlessly.

"Move out and patrol the city zone! Sorry to trouble everyone, please lend me your support. I will treat everyone to a feast after the mission is over today, please show Soujirou your cute and beautiful side!"

Part 2

Lord Marvis' words made Raynesia turn pale.

She didn't understand. She wasn't clear about it at all.

Raynesia smelled the burning stink of danger.

"Ok princess, please prepare with haste all right?"

"Eh, Ah... about that..."

Raynesia turned around for help, Elissa in front of her was lecturing a maid working under her as she reviewed a copy of the documents from Lord Marvis' henchmen.

"Princess."

"How is it?"

"The documents are real... It is hard to imagine, but the fault might lie with us, a loophole in management oversight."

Oversight.

Loophole in management.

Even though Raynesia heard the words, her brain wasn't processing them. The blunder soaked slowly into her consciousness, making her feel cold as if she were touching freezing liquid.

Simply put, Lord Marvis had already informed Raynesia in advance to prepare a warehouse for him when his ship reached Akiba. The same document was delivered to Maihama, and an agreement to help was sent in reply.

This meant Raynesia promised to prepare the warehouse, but forgot about it when preparing for the festival. That was the whole story.

But there was no way to tell what really transpired. There might be an error in delivery resulting in miscommunication, or an error by the administrative clerk. Or Raynesia was too busy and stuffed the document somewhere and lost track of it...

But this was not the time to review what really happened.

Lord Marvis was holding a reply from Raynesia's side, so it was definitely an oversight on Raynesia's part.

And Raynesia as the host had the obligation to assist the guest and make things convenient for him. Also,

the daughter of the Corwen family stationed in Akiba and the noble sea merchant from the west Lord Marvis had different statuses. If you took into account the hidden tension between the eastern and western federations, she had no choice but to eat humble pie.

Raynesia was a woman.

In accordance to the nobles of the People of the Land, she was not educated in the ways of politics. But she could learn about it from the social world.

"Hmph, what's the matter? You are not going to tell me you are not ready for me? I already sent in the request in advance."

"About that..."

It was easy to apologize.

But Raynesia was not used to such dealings and was unable to judge whether she needed to apologize now. The lazy Raynesia wouldn't think 'I should have put in more effort to learn if I knew this kind of situation would come up'. But she still thought there was something she could do about this.

She should have asked a few competent bureaucrats to be dispatched here from Maihama, that should be obvious. She had already gotten permission from her grandfather with some constraints to pick several followers to bring along to Akiba, but that was still not enough.

"Is this the Corwen clan's way of doing things? Or is your working relation with the Adventurers... with Akiba just an illusion?"

His mocking tone made Raynesia lower her head.

Her heart was full of retorts, but Raynesia was not sure of the correct way to say it, or which way of expressing it might be dangerous.

Anyway, she needed to apologize and compensate for the goods on the ship to appease him. She would worry about the details later, could she drag this problem along and solve it after the dinner party? Raynesia thought numbly.

People called her a beautiful princess.

She would get compliments from knights and bureaucrats from whichever banquet she went to.

Raynesia knew that she was acting a role that suited her status in their frozen-like daily lives, but she could feel her body temperature dropping without end right now. Raynesia was unable to understand this. Why were her emotions so unsteady, making her so unhappy?

This regret didn't come from Raynesia since she didn't care for such things. The unhappiness, regret, and remorse must be because of this carefree city...

"Evening!"

Raynesia who was looking at the luxurious carpet stiffly realized someone was standing before her because of the shadow dulling the color of the carpet. Her eyes sprang up to look at the back of someone wearing unfamiliar clothes.

The shirt made from soft cloth not seen by People of the Land before and a hooded vest. This was the young man who pushed Raynesia down a cliff with no means of returning on the day of the crucial speech for the battle of Sand Leaf, Shiroe.

"Shiroe...sama?"

"Who is this?"

"I apologize for my late introduction. I am the leader of Log Horizon, one of the 11 guilds that forms the Round Table Council, Shiroe."

"Shiroe... No family name? Hmmm..."

"That's right, because I am an Adventurer."

The young man in casual clothes in front of Raynesia maintained a leisurely attitude even though he was facing the grand noble of the west. Raynesia took half a step forward even though she was dumbstruck. Adventurers were not familiar with the customs of the People of the Land, this might have serious repercussions. To prevent this, Raynesia decided to become the shield of Akiba.

But a hand was placed gently on Raynesia's shoulder, stopping her with uncompromising strength. This strong and big manly hand belonged to Krusty. Raynesia turned her head to look at Krusty who was stopping her from behind and Krusty said without looking at her.

"Don't worry."

His glasses reflected the light so she was unable to see his expression. But she could see a cruel smile on Krusty's face.

"Lord Marvis, welcome to Akiba. With the fairy-powered ship, your shipping industry is blooming and your name is renowned here."

Shiroe said with a smile, making Marvis stare with his eyes wide open. But his ironic smile remained as he replied "I'm flattered." According to the customs of the People of the Land, this attitude was akin to ridiculing others.

Considering the fact that Shiroe introduced himself as a member of the Round Table Council, he was obviously ridiculing Shiroe and Akiba's Round Table Council. His attitude frustrated Raynesia and made her cheeks grow hot.

But Shiroe didn't mind at all. In the end, he probably didn't understand the customs of the People of the Land.

"And so, what happened? Elissa-san? Where are you?"

"Here Shiroe-san... These are the details."

But Shiroe's words cooled down Raynesia's frustrated heart.

Raynesia could only give a blank expression as she stared at her maid showing Shiroe that document. She didn't know the two of them knew each other. Elissa wore a troubled face, but was still respectful towards this young man.

"Ahah, hmm... is that so? This is possible. I get the general picture... Hey! Michitaka-san!"

Shiroe saved time by shouting for the burly man in the hall instead of using telepathy. The man, who leisurely walked over after hearing his name, was the guild master of Oceanic Systems, Michitaka who was built like a bear. Michitaka greeted everyone as he walked over but was interrupted by Shiroe who cut straight to the chase.

"This is an oversight. Instead of an oversight, it is more like clumsiness and embarrassment... Michitaka-san, due to the blunder of Princess Raynesia, we have some troubling issues."

"Oh I see, this is problematic indeed."

Saying this young man... Shiroe didn't understand social etiquette wasn't quite right, it was more like he was hasty and pragmatic by nature. Raynesia was not good at handling this young man since the first time they met. She was also bad with Krusty, but that was because Raynesia couldn't tell what Krusty was thinking about.

But she felt she was bad at handling this young man because 'Once he makes up his mind, he is willing to do anything no matter how ridiculous and will not compromise'. She feared Krusty because he was incomprehensible, while she was afraid of this young man because he was a hunter who would not hesitate about using Raynesia as bait.

"What are you up to? I am questioning the oversight of Raynesia-jou over here all right?"

Shiroe explained the situation to Michitaka briefly with a smile after Lord Marvis finished.

"This big man over here is Michitaka-san, boss of one of the 11 guilds that comprises the Round Table Council, Oceanic Systems... Lord Marvis requires a warehouse to store his shipment of cargo and has informed Raynesia-san in advance to prepare one for him. She seems to have forgotten about it or lost the document, leading to this failure."

Lord Marvis nodded smugly, agreeing with Shiroe.

"That is correct. The shipment this round consists of food and precious spices. If you leave it in the hot and humid cargo hold on-board, it will rot in a few days."

Raynesia wanted to rebuke him when she heard his words.

He was full of excuses... But it was useless to point this out now.

"Seems like you are using this opportunity to make a big business deal."

"I came personally this time, so I took the best ship in my company with me. You are Shiroe-kun right?"

The middle-aged nobleman who smelled like make-up laughed like an animal. Shiroe's attitude probably pleased him.

"The 'New Fairy Ship Egiru' that made her maiden voyage last month right? I heard the rumors, it is a beautiful ship that reminds people of swans."

"Oh, that news has reached Akiba? That is so... The cargo on this ship is going to be lost due to the oversight of Raynesia-jou. My dear Adventurers, don't you think this is a terrible betrayal?"

"It is indeed regrettable."

(Why is Shiroe-san taking the lord's side... Does he mean that Adventurers don't need to care about the People of the Land...? This issue is obviously linked to the pride of Akiba right?)

"Anyway, I have some matters for Princess Raynesia too. Akatsuki, Henrietta-san."

"Ah?"

Raynesia was focused on Shiroe, so she didn't notice the two of them appearing without a sound. It was the competent lady wearing glasses and the petite girl with black hair that pushed her into the brink during the speech the other time.

"The princess expressed her willingness to make this festival a success, please help her change."

"Ah? Ah?"

The confused Raynesia looked at Elissa to her right.

Elissa shook her head and sighed softly.

Raynesia was disappointed at her unreliable friend and looked at Krusty behind her left shoulder. He just shrugged in reply.

At this moment, the serious young girl with black hair and the smiling glasses lady captured Raynesia. Although their attitudes were respectful, they gave off an uncompromising aura. They reached for Raynesia's clothes without regard for the fact they were in the view of the public.

"Eh, what are you doing? Hmm? How can you change here... Hold up, that's not it, I have an important discussion with Lord Marvis, it is a crucial matter to protect Akiba. Krusty-sama! Please say something, aren't you my knight?"

"... Wasn't that just limited to the conference of the lords?"

"How can you take the oath of a knight so lightly! You want me, Raynesia, to think of it as a joke?"

The half-panicking Raynesia pleaded with Krusty in tears. She could see the villainous smile of the knight in glasses, but he was the only one who could save her.

"We will need to extend the contractual period."

"Please... think of something! I... I am willing to change my clothes! I will change obediently later, So let me clear things up with Lord Marvis!"

"Shiroe-kun... that's what the Princess that extended her contract with me said."

The smiling Henrietta and the serious Akatsuki grabbed Princess Raynesia's hand from either side. At some point of time, this commotion became the center of attention within the hall. Within the wall of people surrounding them, Krusty rushed Shiroe to move to the follow up phase.

"Roger that Krusty-san... we are done with preparations on our side."

"Lord Marvis, I understand the situation, the documents have already been sent to Akiba's Round Table Council."

Krusty who was hiding his expression behind his glasses said simply in a normal volume at this impressionable time. Marvis who heard this sentence all of a sudden gave a blank expression, but composed his emotions and responded in a loud voice.

"What? The Round Table Council had been informed? How can that be... Wait, we are talking about a warehouse here right? Is that something you can prepare so easily? You don't understand, I didn't come in a wagon. Do you not follow our conversation so far?"

"'New Fairy Ship Egru' right? I remember its maximum load is 500 tons and includes freezer compartments, a state-of-the-art vessel."

"You are right Adventurers. Where can you find a warehouse that can store so much goods and has temperature control? You must be dreaming to say you can prepare it right now."

Marvis said arrogantly as he made 'Tch' sounds with his tongue repeatedly, showing off his proud nature.

Raynesia could feel a cold wave coming over her.

Not because of Marvis' arrogance. But because of Marvis' ignorance of Adventurers.

Marvis was a People of the Land noble and was used to commanding people. The nobles of Eastal had the same arrogant nature, but they had no authority over Adventurers. Marvis might be cut down on the spot for his taunting attitude.

Nobles had strong authority in the society of the People of the Land, but they were not immortal. They would be burned to ashes in a tenth of a second if they faced the wrath of Adventurers.

Raynesia had no sympathy for Marvis, but this might spark off a war, inciting the Adventurers to destroy them in righteous fury...

(Ah, ahah, why must I worry about this white pig!)

"What? So you have informed the Round Table Council in advance? That's great. But I heard your rental warehouse is full of the cargo of traveling merchants. Even though you received the notice, but that's the woeful state you are in."

"I am sorry, for this incident, I, Raynesia, will..."

Marvis changed his target to the Adventurers and the Round Table Council. His brash way of putting it almost made Raynesia scream.

"Here are the documents Michitaka-san."

But Shiroe produced a piece of paper like a magician, making everyone freeze in the hall. Raynesia glanced at it for a moment, it seemed to be identical to the copy Marvis was waving around just now.

Although it was hard to say for sure, but the Round Table Council of Akiba seemed to have received the notice Raynesia didn't get.

Michitaka took the document, browsed through the contents and nodded.

"... Do you need wagons to ferry the goods?"

The hidden meaning behind Michitaka's word was that he agreed to this casually. He gave a manly grin and shrugged.

"Could it be..."

"Of course we have warehouses... 500 tons right? That's nothing. Oceanic Systems' guild warehouse is several times that of the warehouse opened for rental by the Adventurers for this event. You think we will be overloaded just handling the merchant caravans? Or you think Adventurers won't help People of the Land?"

"!"

Michitaka's speech made Raynesia clench her fist.

The Adventurers were covering for Raynesia's oversight. Michitaka was a tough guy who preached the glory of Adventurers in front of a roomful of People of the Land at the Ancient Palace of Eternal Ice. Raynesia could not imagine him helping her so selflessly.

(No, he didn't do it for me...)

Raynesia peeked at the young man with his hand on her shoulder. She had to raise her head to see his expression since they were so close, but she couldn't tell even when she saw his face. But Raynesia knew this monster, who she couldn't read, with a smiling but seemingly unhappy face, asked Michitaka for aid on her behalf.

"Krusty-sama..."

"It was because of the perfect policing of the streets, to stop physical altercations, that it made us realize this issue so late."

Raynesia didn't comprehend what Krusty was whispering to her about.

"... Krusty-sama? About that, I am..."

"An important shield... Wrong, a princess."

Raynesia uttered a word of thanks reluctantly to Krusty who was not looking at her. The favors she owed this young man just kept on accumulating. Her feeling of guilt was growing like a ball of rolling snow, making her conscience and pride scream in pain. But Krusty said 'You should thank Shiroe-kun instead', these strange words when he heard her words of thanks.

Marvis' expression grew grim on the other hand.

After making a 'Tch' sound with his tongue, he glared at Shiroe. But Shiroe didn't care about Marvis' glare.

The grand noble of Westelande bid a few words of good bye before leaving the hall.

Raynesia felt her legs go numb and lose strength. Marvis left. His pride wounded, but he kept his life. And this side had also avoided clashing with Marvis and the entire west.

This unexpected ending made Raynesia so at ease she almost turned into foam.

"Okay, that's settled. I leave the rest to you two."

"Understood Shiroe-sama."

"By your order, my lord."

The two of them used Raynesia's mental lapse to drag her away. The knight who had extended his contract with her waved her farewell. But Raynesia only realized this when she was stripped to her underwear.

Part 3

Raynesia's dinner party was ruined.

But it was still a grandiose event.

The main doors of the Maihama consulate in Akiba was wide open, and the guests spilled out onto the central square. They mingled with the crowd enjoying the festival in the evening sun and food dishes were carried outside for all to enjoy.

The amount was not enough for the masses and the eateries facing the central square ran their kitchens at full capacity. Shiroe spread the word that all expenses would be covered by the Round Table Council, prompting the unending flow of food and drinks to the crowd 'till their stock ran out.

But this caused the standard of the feast to drop below Raynesia's expectations. Instead of a buffet-style dinner party, it felt more like a festival or a flower watching gathering. But such details didn't seem to matter to the Adventurers.

When Raynesia appeared in the central square escorted by Krusty, the crowd erupted into cheers. Ever since the expedition speech, Raynesia attended many public events, but this was the first time she made an appearance so directly in Akiba.

The princess let the knight lead her by the fingers as she gazed slightly downwards. Her blushing cheek made her look like a beautiful flower, mesmerizing many Adventurers. Her shy appearance was like a beautiful young lady you dreamed about.



The surprising thing was her dress.

Raynesia was wearing a long tight denim skirt, a light green top that matched the autumn season and a bolero short jacket. Her long skirt was elegant but casual, her long silver hair flowed over her back with a black ribbon on top.

Raynesia always wore gothic clothing that matched her People of the Land nobility status. No one in Akiba expected her to dress like this.

The atmosphere in the central square went wild. By the standard of the old world, this was a dress for a casual date for the Adventurers; for the People of the Land, these were fashionable clothes that gave off the modern feel of the Adventurers.

Raynesia walked to the south edge of the central square under the lead of Krusty with a stiff expression and sat on the cushion of an elegant chair that was crafted in a hurry. It was made through the in-game menu, the temporary pavilion was also built in just 15 minutes.

The sun had already set, and the square was full of torches. A Fairy Light near Raynesia illuminated her surrounding twice as brightly, probably conjured by a caring Summoner.

Black Sword Issac drew his trademark sword declaring that the princess would stay in this chair due to security concerns, but wanted to enjoy this festive night with everyone present. Also, anyone who wanted to may come to the pavilion to greet the princess. This announcement made the crowd go wilder.

Compared to Adventurers, the People of the Land were even more surprised. They, especially the spies that took part in the conspiracy, were caravan merchants that hailed from towns and villages around Akiba. They usually rode a horse or a wagon, making business between the villages. Someone like them wouldn't have the chance to see the princess so close in person. And not only did they have the chance to gaze from afar, they could even greet her in person, a stunning experience.

Even so, only a handful took up the offer without hesitation. A third of them were People of the Land while the rest were Japanese Adventurers with a cautious nature.

Even the orchestra Raynesia hired were playing classic Yamato pieces, everyone was holding back and being too reserved.

The one to lead the way was Michitaka.

He brought along about a dozen other guild masters to the elegant couch in the pavilion surrounded by screens and covered by parasols. He greeted Raynesia warmly as she breathed a sigh of relief. The other guilds also took action after seeing this.

With many Adventurers lining up to greet the princess, the maids working under Elissa started to move hurriedly.

Shiroe watched this scene from the sky bridge that overlooked the central square, pouring tea into a glass. In the joyous occasion below, Princess Raynesia chatted happily with the Adventurers. Other People of the Land and Adventurers were also mingling together, which was the best proof the Libra Festival was a

success.

The People of the Land noble Raynesia dressed in the fashion of the old world made an appearance at the central square. This action sent a strong message to all those present in this festival.

It was a message of peace and friendship. Their unity could ward off the attack this round.

Shiroe thought that Akiba was victorious in fending off the attack.

The origin of the attack should be the Westelande nobleman Marvis who took his leave at Raynesia's party.

(But from his brash style, it is hard to see him as the mastermind behind this.)

Shiroe thought he was just one of the core players in this attack.

It was still too early to judge whether the attack was over. The festival was still under high alert, the security detail under the command of Krusty and Issac was stationed near the entrance, deterring any physical alterations.

It was the same with the girls working with Soujirou who ward off the arguments between merchants with their feminine charms while patrolling.

Shiroe who was nominated as the tactician received periodic telepathy reports and queries on how to handle certain situations.

One of the reasons he was staying at this place overlooking the central square was for the convenience of going anywhere that needed him quickly.

But Shiroe was not too worried about it.

The attack against the trust and handling speed of the Round Table Council had the main aim of putting them into disarray. For this tactic to work, it needed to use the element of surprise as support. With the Round Table Council prepared for it, it would have limited effectiveness.

Worse case scenarios did exist, but it was pointless to brood over them. You couldn't use all your best moves in some battles and were forced to react to your opponent's moves. Maintaining high alert till the end of the festival was the best option right now.

... But the attack will come sooner or later. Shiroe sighed as he thought about this, as the activities in the plaza below continued to flow. The crowds around Raynesia and the eateries were the same, but there were new people and music joining the fray. Soujirou's personal guards cleared a pathway to the guild building, standing on either side of the pavement.

The one leading the way was Maryele.

Her curly green hair and bright shining smile. Maryele's alluring, bouncing breasts were covered by a stylishly-tailored jacket as she moved with energetic steps.

This was not at the level of supermodels yet, but she turned and waved both hands at the crowd after reaching the end of the makeshift catwalk, acting just like one.

(That's really great Mary-nee. I can't stay moody even if I want to.)

Maryele's appearance made Shiroe feel motivated and hurt his head at the same time. Next up was Henrietta and Akatsuki.

Henrietta and Akatsuki always wore secretary attire and black shinobi costumes respectively like uniforms. But they changed their styles just for today. The two of them were wearing the attire promoted by Crescent Moon Alliance which looked native and casual. Their clothing differed slightly, making them look like sisters.

... Because of the height difference, they looked like sisters with a wide age gap, but it was best not to say this out loud. Henrietta was hyperactive, hugging Akatsuki, rubbing her face on hers and twirling around elegantly. Watching them, Shiroe made a decision with a smile.

Unaware of the stares from the crowd (a fortunate thing for Akatsuki), the two of them played around before meeting up with Maryele and walking to the central square. Maryele ignored the stunned crowd, going directly to Raynesia and pulled her up by the hand. This was just like Maryele's bold nature.

Akatsuki whispered to Raynesia from behind. Seeing how Raynesia's face was turning green, she was being intimidated once again. Maryele led Raynesia to the central square just like this, forming a circle and turning around along with Henrietta and Akatsuki.

Instead of holding a fashion show indoors, they would have wider exposure doing it this way. The 'Firebird' and 'Lightning Phoenix' resting at the top of the guild building shone over everyone. Waves of applause went back and fro through the crowd.

The lively music playing was from a memorable pop song of the old world. The slightly aged melody was recreated using the classical Middle Ages instruments in this world.

Raynesia didn't know what to do as she looked around with a perplexed expression. But pretty girls had it good in this type of situation. Even in a common dress of the old world, it matched her perfectly if she gave a shy smile.

"Shiroe...san."

"Thanks for the hard work Minori."

This polite greeting made Shiroe lift his gaze from the plaza. Minori walked from the guild building towards the connected sky bridge. She wore a complicated expression of pride, joy, and humility on her face.

Shiroe didn't know what his petite companion was thinking about, but he knew what she had accomplished on this chaotic day. She completed the primary administrative work alongside Charasin. The responsibility was equivalent to leading a hundred-man raid.

"Take a seat."

"Eh, but..."

Minori was hesitant, Shiroe gestured to the side of the wooden bench he was sitting on. Shiroe took a glass from his bag and wiped it clean. He then poured the same fruit tea he was drinking into it and offered it to the panicky Minori.

"Erm.."

"Thank you, and you did great."

"Eh, yes!"

Minori with her voice a few octaves higher and her back straightened looked so cute, it made Shiroe smile. He didn't know whether Minori realized the value of the work she had done.

Minori held the glass with both hands,

Their view was illuminated with the light of many torches and conjured shining creatures like Bug Light Lamp. They could see the lively festival below thanks to them.

A part of this festive atmosphere was protected through Minori's efforts.

Shiroe thought her hands were small.

But these tiny hands of a middle school student held the determination to stay at her post.

When Minori reported her intention to stay and help at the Production Guild Liaison Committee, Shiroe surprisingly sensed acknowledgement. After all the time Shiroe and Minori spent together, he could feel her hardworking nature that could not be suppressed within her heart.

Her twin Tohya also had the passion to improve himself, but he was already set earlier on to focus on fighting and physical strength. In comparison, Minori was hesitant on which route to take. But she would definitely find her path to follow one day.

Minori achieved a victory Shiroe didn't expect, in a place of her own choosing.

(She is much more dependable than me...)

Shiroe jeered at himself and sighed. He recollected his miserable middle school days.

Minori's display of her strong will was nothing like Shiroe's old days. Shiroe remembered being a typical overly self conscious delusional middle schooler. He used to think of himself as being special and different, but failed to realize that his 'uniqueness' was the same as others.

It was so embarrassing just thinking back.

"Shiroe-san, may I ask..."

"What is it?"

"Aren't you going to greet her? Among the guilds that make up the Round Table Council, only Log Horizon hasn't done so right?"

Shiroe shrugged and replied vaguely.

"We met not too long ago."

Their conversation on the sky bridge was drowned out by the cheers down below. Probably because of a new set set of clothes from some guild making its fashion debut? Shiroe listened to his telepathy messages and gave short replies every now and then. After some time, Minori raised a new question.

"You... Did this on purpose right?"

"Yeah."

"... I'm sorry Shiroe-san."

Minori hung her head in shame.

"No need to apologize, it's not something I want to make known to the world."

"I butted in needlessly, wanting to take Shiroe-san to the dinner party... But thinking about it carefully, there is no need to do that. There is no way Shiroe-san of the 11 founding guilds will fail to secure an invitation right? So you wanted Princess Raynesia to detest you right from the start correct?"

This was not questioning, but seeking confirmation.

(What an incredibly brilliant girl.)

This tactic was not hard to see through, several members of the Round Table had already realized this. This strategy can only work if his comrades understood it to some extent.

"Because Krusty-san is close to the princess, and having someone she clearly hates and clearly likes will make it easier to push her along. It will be the same for the future too."

"The princess is in a precarious position. Her beauty, straightforward nature, and honesty holds the sympathy of the masses, but it won't last forever. Although she likes Akiba now, there is no telling if she will continue to do so. She has improved the relations between the People of the Land and Adventurers, but it's hard to gauge how long this will last. There will be plenty of instances in the future that require us to adopt a tough stance. Crises that will make this attack look insignificant are sure to follow, so we need to divide the roles to play ahead of time."

This tactic was dependent on 'Krusty being considerate of the Princess' feelings' as a prerequisite. Krusty who was aware of this strategy was grumpy about it, but it couldn't be helped since these were the assigned roles. Krusty was the senate leader of the Round Table Council after all, it would be troubling if

he was unwilling to play this part.

From what Shiroe saw, Krusty was just as unhappy about being manipulated by Shiroe. But if left alone, Shiroe was sure Krusty would help the Princess in the end anyway.

Also...

Following his flowing thoughts, Shiroe focused on the limits of the future he could forecast. In the combination of blurry predictions, he could see a vague future.

The Princess with a bad personality needed Krusty.

And Krusty also needed the Princess... Hopefully.

"Shiroe-san... Is this really what you hope for?"

"Why do you ask?"

A part of Shiroe's consciousness heard Minori talking to him and stopped his train of thought. Shiroe's companion showed a troubled and pained expression.

"Because..."

Minori talked in bits and pieces, Shiroe waited patiently for her continuation that didn't come.

"If it is about the troubles Log Horizon will be facing... Regarding this, at some point in time, I planned to have Chief Nyanta take everyone to visit Princess Raynesia, maybe at a dinner party. Minori would need to doll up for that event too, the sky blue dress you wore that time looks cute on you."

Shiroe's speech made Minori even more depressed.

Is that a bad way to reply? Shiroe scratched his head. Seemed like this did not satisfy her, or he was going about this the wrong way.

"Won't you feel sad Shiroe-san?"

"..."

Ah, so that's how someone watching from the side might see it. This was beyond Shiroe's calculations. Since this was such a normal sensibility, Shiroe did not even think about it.

"No such thing, this is normal."

"..."

Seemed like Minori had a hard time accepting this explanation.

This was just one of the parts they needed to play, and Shiroe just happened to be suitable for this role.

Minori with her lips tightly closed looked really prim and proper. Her big eyes looked like they were going to tear up, her cheeks were tense and red. Minori's brows furrowed in anger showing her unwillingness to back down.

"Minori has been a big help in aiding the Production Guild Liaison Committee. The things you did are more worthwhile than 10 staff helping on site. You did great Minori."

Shiroe's praise made Minori blink her eyes.

"It's the same rationale Minori, the things that need to be done are right in front of me, I can do it and others hold that expectation of me as well. This is a good thing, something that we should be proud of. Since doing so is helpful, I think it is just fine."

Minori showed a troubled face.

This couldn't be helped. Shiroe didn't say this because he understood this rationale. The Shiroe who had avoided guilds thinking it was a bother had no right to say this. This was a speech only experienced guild leader like Michitaka or Krusty could make.

But after Shiroe founded his guild with his comrades, he finally understood something. He was just a wandering soul, even if he got stronger alone, it would be a hollow strength that wouldn't be channeled anywhere. It was a power others wouldn't be able to feel and appreciate.

It was still strength even if he achieved it alone, but Shiroe thought comrades were necessary to use this strength. And you needed the world for your comrades to reach their full potential. Although it was still vague and blurry now, Shiroe felt that Log Horizon was an important place to make this theory come true.

"I will work just as hard as you Minori."

Minori nodded with an expression that was a mixture of confusion, anger and sadness. What Shiroe could do was reflect on his actions. In the end, he could only respond to the hardworking middle schooler Minori in this unsightly manner.

He felt he was being encouraged and lectured by her.

... This couldn't be avoided.

This petite girl deserved a reward tonight. A member of Log Horizon being an valuable asset this day made Shiroe happy. To have guided Minori at one point also gave him a warm feeling in his heart. Shiroe was not sad even though he was seen as an elder or teacher by Minori.

Shiroe gave an awkward smile and nodded his head.

"I will work hard so Minori will not be troubled."

Part 4

Akatsuki suppressed her rapid breathing, stopping in her tracks after rushing up the grey stairs. It was fine for her to walk up to him as usual, but Akatsuki couldn't make herself to do it because she didn't want Shiroe to see her out of breath.

She was still wearing the frilly clothes Henrietta forced on her. With laces sewed at its ends, it looked cute but was too light. Akatsuki, who had grown accustomed to the battle suits in this world, felt naked and defenseless walking the streets in this.

Also, it was hard to hide herself and sneak up on Shiroe in this.

Akatsuki hid under the shade of the ancient tree that pierced through the sky bridge to calm her breathing. She didn't want Shiroe to know she rushed all the way here.

Akatsuki felt she had grown closer to Shiroe over the past few days. She even managed to touch Shiroe's hair on the balcony of their guild house last night. It was colder than she imagined and different from hers, the hair of a man. Strong and smooth, flowing through Akatsuki's fingers.

It was an experience that made Akatsuki happy with minimal physical contact. She intentionally pulled a long face, telling Shiroe she was happy, which subsequently confused Shiroe, making him ask her to, again, confirm her feelings.

Those were happy times.

But her decision to catch her breath gave her the opportunity to overhear this conversation.

Shiroe leaned on the railings of the sky bridge, looking down at the central square illuminated by bonfires. There was a young lady beside him... Minori, a companion of Akatsuki from Log Horizon.

Shiroe and Minori's words were carried by the wind that blew throughout Akiba towards Akatsuki who caught pieces of it.

"You... Did this on purpose right?"

"Yeah."

"... I'm sorry Shiroe-san."

In the beginning, Akatsuki didn't understand what they were talking about.

"No need to apologize, it's not something I want to make known to the world."

"I butted in needlessly, wanting to take Shiroe-san to the dinner party... But thinking about it carefully, there is no need to do that. There is no way Shiroe-san of the 11 founding guilds would fail to secure an invitation right? So you wanted Raynesia to detest you right from the start correct?"

Akatsuki almost made a sound when she heard this.

... Shiroe... Planned to be detested?

This was a perspective Akatsuki never thought of.

The unexpected interaction between the two made Akatsuki forget to call out to Shiroe, she could only listen intently to them. Their dialogue could be heard in bits and pieces through the disruption of the autumn wind.

Akatsuki tried to think about Minori's 'planned to be detested' words. But a chill went down her spine as she began to understand its meaning. Akatsuki heard about an unknown source finding trouble with Akiba from Shiroe before.

Although she didn't comprehend the meaning, she knew that Shiroe had successfully defended Akiba.

But she didn't think about it the way Minori did.

Unlike Minori, she didn't consider how everyone else would think about Shiroe.

Unlike Minori, she didn't think about how Log Horizon's position would be affected by all this.

Unlike Minori, she didn't split up with Shiroe and fight for his sake on another front.

... Unlike Minori, she didn't help Shiroe with his trouble.

Akatsuki's heart started to race in her modest chest.

The Shiroe that felt so close last night was gradually growing further away from her? This gave her a pure sense of terror.

Just like the fear of a child abandoned in the darkness, she moaned soundlessly in her chest.

Shiroe was going so far away.

No, he was far away from the beginning.

Him being by Akatsuki's side was just an illusion.

Ever since the day Shiroe saved Akatsuki, she had stayed by his side. Addressing Shiroe as lord, becoming his shadow, wielding her blade for him all this while. She could also feel Shiroe protecting her at the same time, which made her very comfortable.

Maybe only Akatsuki thought they were protecting each other.

(At the very least, I don't understand my lord to that extent...)

It was hard to acknowledge this.

She couldn't measure up to this middle-schooler from the same guild.

Accepting that she couldn't hold a candle to Minori. This bitterness and pain gave her a sensation of falling, as if the ground around her feet was being frozen and came crumbling down.

Akatsuki grabbed her blade subconsciously with trembling hands. Akatsuki could feel it vaguely.

She noticed her limits and what it meant.

Assassins have the strongest attack among all 12 classes. For the sake of her pride, Akatsuki had worked in the art of fighting. Her attack power or individual battle power should be in the top tier among the Adventurers. But among the top tier, she ranked in the middle of the pile.

Akatsuki didn't have experience in major raids.

This could not be helped. Akatsuki was a solo player, living a solitary lifestyle free of any guilds. For solo players to participate in major raids, they could only wait for big guilds looking to fill a raid vacancy or by forming a temporary raid alliance. Joining a group like Debauchery Tea Party was another way, but that was a rare instance. Gathering Adventurers to form a group that had nothing to do with guilds took a lot of effort, even forming a new guild was easier to gain fame and members.

In the end, major raids needed teamwork and training, a hard gaming mode to pull off. If you didn't do it with fixed members, the success rate would drop. Big guilds equating to major raids were an accepted fact.

Shiroe, Nyanta, and Naotsugu were all solo players or members of small guilds, but they were experienced top-notch Adventurers within the whole server in their group the Debauchery Tea Party.

In comparison, Akatsuki was the finest amongst solo players, but in terms of equipment, knowledge, and familiarity with teamwork battles, it was not at the top notch level.

(Am I... just a fake...)

She hugged herself and shook slightly.

The skills she relied upon so far, which she claimed could protect Shiroe, were not at top notch level. Confirming this once again shattered Akatsuki's pride completely.

But that's not all. Major raids were a high difficulty playing mode and there were plenty of Adventurers who didn't have experience with this.

But a low-level Kannagi reached Shiroe's side in a way Akatsuki never thought of. Akatsuki who prided herself in her battle techniques and lived all this time in the alternate world believing in this, was doubly hurt by this.

"... The things you did are more worthwhile than 10 staff helping on site. You did great Minori."

Shiroe's voice echoed in Akatsuki's ears.

Not only did this girl Minori see through Shiroe's thinking, she also fought hard in her own battles to lessen Shiroe's burden. She was less than half Akatsuki's level, but this middle school girl used her talents to the fullest and reached a higher plane of achievement than Akatsuki. And Minori was concerned with Shiroe all this time too.

Akatsuki never tried to empathize with Shiroe.

Empathize with the loneliness of Shiroe which she never thought existed before.

This fact overwhelmed Akatsuki. The acceptance of this fact stabbed Akatsuki's heart like shattered glass, taking away the words Akatsuki wanted to tell Shiroe.

Part 5

The dinner party naturally evolved into a banquet in the city square and the citizens had high praise for this. Raynesia, who had used all her stamina, lay exhausted on her chair. But the scenery of the princess waving weakly looked cute and won rave reviews, pretty girls had it good for anything they did.

On the other hand, Shiroe enjoyed this banquet on the sky bridge. But Shiroe still played the role of tactician and talked to others through telepathy most of the time, only conversing with Minori occasionally.

The sky grew bright as the festival entered its 3rd day.

Shiroe gathered all the members of Log Horizon to visit the flea market on this last day of the festival.

The flea market was different from the autumn clothing expo and was mainly selling weapons. A variety of items like furniture, guild facilities, decorations, books, scrolls, food and monster drop items were sold here.

There were many People of the Land and their merchant caravans that had traveled all this way just for this flea market.

Nyanta and Shiroe felt a sense of nostalgia, searching for the merchandise of the village they visited on their trip back from Susukino, but they didn't find any. But Nyanta did find some fine salted pork ribs.

With such a wide array of goods, the members released their reservations and went on a shopping spree. Tohya brought a new 'red intimidation star' helmet, while Naotsugu bought potions in bulk.

Shiroe accepted Minori and Nyanta's proposal and bought several carpets and a communal water tank with their guild funds. They needed all sorts of things for the winter, and with so many items available for sale, their eyes glittered like a kids in a candy store.

After the banquet ended, Akatsuki resumed wearing her black clothes. On this 3rd day, she wore her usual expression that was so dignified that it looked sullen, protecting Shiroe without a word. Shiroe thought there was no need to be dressed so uptight for the festival, but Akatsuki was stubborn in her own ways.

Akatsuki who looked a bit tired in the morning, regained her lively mood in the afternoon after being teased by Naotsugu. Akatsuki calling Naotsugu stupid and kneeing him in the face was becoming a common scene which Shiroe could only watch with a bitter smile.

As Shiroe expected, the attacks against the Round Table Council were totally gone. These types of attacks were hard to carry out when defensive measures were set in place. Since they anticipated this, Shiroe's group enjoyed this rare holiday happily.

When the sun set on this 3rd day, Akiba went into an after party phase. Continuing the banquet last night, it was a full fledged banquet this round. Since the Round Table Council were the organizers, many barrels of wine were put in front of the guild building, becoming a lively and popular spot for all participants.

The Round Table Council wanted to use this opportunity to implement some projects to aid the small guilds, one of them was to help them recruit solo players without guilds, as well as the possibility of letting the departments within large guilds gain independence. The young Adventurers continued to debate about this even after getting dizzy from all the alcohol.

In this after party, illuminated by bonfires, Raynesia probably would attend in her beautiful dress. The pillars of the Round Table Council, Michitaka, Krusty, Issac, Charasin, Rodrick, Maryele, and others, would also drink to the reunion of old friends and the meeting of new ones.

Although many incidents happened in Akiba's Libra Festival, it still ended in success. The comrades of Log Horizon also praised each others' work in the festival and recuperated their energy for tomorrow.

The Libra Festival which marked the turning point in Akiba's history ended without many people knowing the storm behind the scene.

Interlude

But...

On the last day of the Libra Festival, Shiroe left his guild members behind and moved alone under the dark night sky.

These were ruins in the south of Akiba. Between the metal shutter buried in debris, the wet stairs extended endlessly. This building should be a water tank or boiler room during ancient times, as countless pipes could be seen on the exposed cement wall.

Shiroe visited here for a reason.

Shiroe came here to pay his old friend Ooshima a visit. Shiroe asked Ooshima to search for information regarding the Holy Empire Westelande, and to prepare for the worse case scenario, they cut down on the number of times they communicated by telepathy. Also, he needed to retrieve something, so Shiroe wanted to exchange intelligence with him face-to-face. But he felt uneasy about this.

In the suffocating silent darkness, Shiroe called forth a weak magic light and moved cautiously. He opened a door labeled 'Control Room' and saw a space more habitable than outside.

" ..."

"Are you Shiroe-sama? I am Dariella, a People of the Land traveling writer..."

But the person in the room waiting for Shiroe was not who he expected.

Her wavy black hair, red lips and obsidian eyes shone from her white oval face. The robe that formed intrinsic patterns with red and blue threads covered her soft and well-filled-out body. She was sitting there, but it felt like she was moving slowly.

She was a beauty that attracted one's attention at a glance.

The definition of beauty was broad; Akatsuki was also a beauty, and the woman in front of him had a charm that rivaled Akatsuki, but was of a different nature.

Even Shiroe who didn't normally care about the looks of women felt a little light-headed seeing her alluring face, he could feel his cheeks heating up.

"Ooshima-san who was suppose to wait for Shiroe-sama is not able to move freely right now... So I came on his behalf to pass the message in his stead."

That's right, Shiroe planned to meet with the Adventurer Ooshima here, a tiny and agile dwarf youth, not a black-haired beauty.

Dariella/ 2nd class citizen/ level 10.

Shiroe looked at her status screen, obtaining information to confirm her words. Because of this, Shiroe's mind who was dazzled by her sweetness squeezed out these words:

"... I have never heard of such magic. Nureha-san, what is that disguise?"

A dark underground control room.

In this small room, a heavy silence fell between the female on the couch and Shiroe. The beauty laughed and twisted her beauty at the tense Shiroe, drawing a small sigil in the air with her finger.

Countless small pigeons took flight from her beautiful black hair, as if they were sucking away Shiroe's light source. The effects of black birds flying and merging with the air should be an unknown type of spell.



The alluring beauty had the same face, but was now wearing a black gothic dress made from the feathers of crows. She had animal ears and a tail which was white at the tip.

"Fufu, fufufu... How did Shiro-sama know? Information about 'Overlay' shouldn't have spread here yet."

"It's my gut feeling."

Shiroe adopted a strong tone.

The lady in the basement just now was definitely a level 10 People of the Land, named Dariella. Shiroe confirmed this using the status screen. According to the common sense of Elder Tales, this was an established fact, there were no two ways about it. The only reason Shiroe doubted this was because of his instinct and intelligence that came from another channel other than Ooshima.

Shiroe was certain that Nureha was somewhere in Akiba at this moment. He didn't expect Nureha to appear in front of him, but it was more believable for the source of the trouble to turn up instead of a beautiful 'People of the Land writer'.

"Intuition... But you knew my name right?"

The beauty facing him, Nureha, gave a charming smile. Even though Shiroe knew her identity, he couldn't help himself from looking at her.

"... Please take a seat okay?"

Nureha looked at Shiroe with watery eyes. Shiroe could see Nureha's white and defenseless throat from this angle, making him close his mouth tightly. If he didn't do this, Shiroe was afraid he would keep on staring.

"Don't put your guard up. Look... I didn't even bring my magic bag and am unarmed. I came alone to meet Shiro-sama."

Nureha said when Shiroe cautiously sat on an office chair near the door.

"Isn't that rather careless for the leader of the west?"

"I am not the leader of anything."

Nureha smiled.

Her pose, putting her index finger on her lips, made her look cute and young. She seemed about the same age as Shiroe, but she could change the atmosphere with different actions using her beautiful looks. She might seem like a bewitching lady, but you could see her pure and naive side too.

Shiroe felt her charm was terrifying.

Like a white flower blooming proudly in the darkness, a sweetness that could numb your senses.

This lady was the guild master of 'Plant hwyaden' after all.

A renowned gigantic guild that remained a mystery, 'Plant hwyaden'. The beauty at the top of the guild, 'Councillor of the West' Nureha.

The beginning of all this happened at the time Shiroe was plotting the formation of the Round Table Council.

Shiroe back then was planning to revitalize and bring order to the chaotic Akiba with a depressed atmosphere after the Catastrophe.

Coincidentally, the same thing was happening to the players in Minami, a city in the west. There was chaos, depression, and security deteriorated. But a certain Adventurer attempted to change this just like Shiroe.

That person was the defenseless beauty sitting in front of Shiroe, Nureha.

But Nureha's plan for the future and means of achieving it was totally different from Shiroe's.

Nureha approached the Itsuki clan, whom inherited the bloodline of the rulers of ancient Yamato, Westelande dynasty, ranking first among the clans in Yamato nobility society. Unlike the east which was ruled by the League of Freedom Towns Eastal, the Holy Empire Westelande was ruled centrally by the Itsuki Dukedom in Kyoto.

This governance applied only to People of the Land, and had nothing to do with Adventurers. The Adventurers didn't care for the People of the Land and their nobles even after the Catastrophe.

But Nureha was different. She approached and won the affection of the nobles and the Itsuki clan. Although her intentions were unknown, Nureha used her charms to win over the People of the Land, planting her poisonous seeds.

When Shiroe went towards Susukino, Minami's city guards had become Nureha's personal army, and she used the wealth of the People of the Land to purchase the cathedral zone.

A powerful army and control over life and death. With these 2 weapons, Nureha continued to stay behind the scenes and plotted calmly and adequately in secret. She founded Plant hwyaden and slowly gathered supporters which reached a colossal scale in no time. The members consisted mainly of the elite players of the west.

But one day, Nureha made an official announcement.

... All Adventurers residing in Minami must join Plant hwyaden.

"Ruling with a single guild, a city with no discrimination based on guilds."

This was the style of governance proposed by Nureha.

"Pardon me for being blunt, but even if you leave running of the operations to Inticus, Misuha, and Zerodus, you are still the Councillor of the West."

"I didn't leave it to them, all right? Everyone is just doing it the way they want to. I didn't plan to bind everybody, just give them a home to live in... And being protected by everyone. This is my only wish."

Her fluent speech was like the song of a siren, the sweet sound tempting men to listen forever.

"... Please tell me why you have come."

"You are so hasty Shiro-sama."

"You were the one deceiving me in the first place."

"... Fufufu, I get it. Since Shiro-sama says so, I will cooperate with you. Actually I..."

Nureha continued after being pushed by Shiroe.

"I came here to invite you. Shiro-sama, please join Plant hwyaden, come to my side. I wish to work besides you, I want you to protect me."

"Why?"

"I mean it literally, I want you Shiro-sama... It is embarrassing, but I have known about Shiro-sama for a long time."

That was nothing surprising.

Both Shiroe and Nureha were Enchanters. Enchanters were an unpopular class in Elder Tales, their numbers were only about half the average of the other classes.

When Elder Tales was just a game, the Japanese server had about 80,000 players, but as far as Shiroe knew, only 2,000 were level 90 Enchanters.

In MMORPGs, the Adventurers of the same class would take note of each other.

What were their equipment? How were they building their character? How were they fighting? Since it was a game, the best research subjects for building your character and using techniques were players in similar positions. It might sound greedy, but you could learn more from players who were better than you.

This was a common perspective when playing a game.

The Adventurers who joined major guilds to find excellent equipment after completing raids as well as Adventurers who researched battle tactics only made up a small number. If you limited this to Enchanters, the number was about a 100. Since it was only a 100, it was possible to know all their names.

Shiroe knew about all the high level enchanters in Japan's server, so he was aware of Nureha.

Nureha was similar to Shiroe, an Enchanter who chose not to join any guilds. Enchanters who took part in major raids despite not being in any large guilds were rarer than the Iriomote cat^[9] that was on the brink of extinction. They must have met 2 or 3 times before, an industry of 100 was small for a veteran player like Shiroe.

"I know what Shiro-sama is thinking about, but that's not it. I didn't know about Shiroe-sama because you are an Enchanter. And I didn't want to recruit you because of your Enchanter class."

"So what is this about?"

Nureha did not look away.

She looked at Shiroe with dreamy eyes, as if she wanted to inject something into him. She continued weaving her words that were as sharp as knives.

"Didn't you develop a new concept of magic in Sand Leaf? I don't know the details, but it was modification magic on a grand scale... Shiro-sama is special, so I knew you would do such great deeds."

"It's the same for you Nureha-san right? I am ignorant of the specifics, but you managed to restart the intercity transport gate, although its use is still limited."

In the basement where the air was so tense you could cut it with a knife, Shiroe and Nureha stared at each other.

Shiroe didn't think news of his contractual magic would leak, but he managed to get news of techniques from the west as well. Shiroe replied with his sharp words, glaring at Nureha.

"Shiro-sama is special indeed, you know everything... Just knowing that everything I hid behind the scenes has been seen through by you makes my cheeks burn hot."

"No need for formalities... The one who instructed the classification of all information from the west was you wasn't it?"

Plant hwyaden was a strictly controlled singular guild, divided into many detailed department and was tightly organized.

Shiroe understood the policy Nureha was pushing.

Wiping out the discrimination big guilds had towards small ones, recovering the security in Minami, uniting them and coordinating their efforts to return home. Using a well-organized singular guild was the most effective way of achieving their goal, that's the truth behind the governance of Minami and Shiroe agreed that it had its strong points.

Plant hwyaden which was founded with this righteous goal in mind, became a highly united and easy to control organization.

And so they were very united against outsiders and was a group that would not leak intelligence easily.

The Round Table Council used the liberal self-governance of the guilds, so they needed to be open about the topics of their conference. Disclosure of information was the basis of the council, so outsiders would be able to see their movements and trend in open view.

On the other hand, the one guild governance of Plant hwyaden was operated by the central executive committee, no other person would know the real situation of the central committee. Shiroe was one of the few very information savvy people in Akiba, but Plant hwyaden was like a face in the fog to him. Even more so for the Adventurers in Akiba, they only knew it was a strange place dominated by a single guild.

Shiroe's purpose of meeting with Ooshima was to find out news about Minami and to fetch some items.

"No, I already said it right? I adopted a free reign policy. Sealing off the spread of information was a decision made by Misuha."

"So the saturation attack on the administrative powers of the Round Table Council in Akiba was the same?"

"That's right. That's the shallow thinking of the house of lords and Marvis going out of control,"

Shiroe didn't believe this, even if she didn't come up with it, she did nothing to stop it. When Shiroe was about to speak, Nureha put a finger to his lips as if to disrupt him.

Shiroe brushed off Nureha's hand. He didn't notice Nureha getting so close.

"I came here to invite Shiro-sama. Are you willing to come to my side?"

"Tell this kind of wish to Soujirou, this is not my area of expertise."

"Soujirou-san..."

Nureha showed a faint look of danger, but it was replaced with a troubled expression the next moment.

"Compared to Soujirou-san, I want Shiro-sama more. Compared to Soujirou-san, I think Shiro-sama is more special. I came all the way to this city just to invite Shiro-sama, to ask for Shiro-sama's companionship."

Her speech made Shiroe's vision go white.

Shiroe was unable to feel any sincerity from the woman in front of him.

Shiroe could feel from his instinct that this lady was sculpted from lies and sins. But even though he understood, this temptation still made him dizzy. Shiroe felt that his immunity towards women was too low.

(No one has said I was more special than Soujirou before... how shameful.)

"Can't you...?"

"Because this is not the truth."

"...I see."

Nureha gazed downwards and replied softly.

The feelings of being entwined faded away from Shiroe, replaced by a fragile and brittle feeling.

"Then, if I tell you the truth, would you be willing to come to me?"

"I need to hear it before judging."

"The truth is nothing fantastic right?"

Nureha maintained her fragile expression like old earthenware, letting out a hoarse laugh.

"... All right. Because you are Shiro-sama, because you are special, because you are unique, I need to display the appropriate determination. Yes, I understand, because I have been waiting for this all the while..."

Nureha continued like chanting a curse.

"Shiro-sama, I... am an ugly girl."

"Ah...?"

"I am honored to surprise you. Anyway, my eyes are scarily big, I'm petite in size and have no figure... an ugly child who only knows how to look around greedily."

It was only natural for Shiroe to be surprised. The beauty in front of him had overly strong eyes, but she had a face anyone would describe as alluring.

But the topic was going in a direction Shiroe did not expect.

"I was really skinny in elementary school. Not only my ribs, even the bones in my limbs were visible. My hair was a mess, my clothes were full of stains, I was closer to a dirty girl than an ugly girl."

"I grew taller in middle school, but my weight did not increase, I was still skinny to the bone. I think I was a disgusting girl who looked at her surroundings from behind her fringe."

"I remember starting to change from my 2nd year of middle school. Because of some reasons, I gained some financial support and started to have proper meals. Although my body didn't get used to it in the beginning, my body weight still increased gradually... but I was still skinny and frail. Barely improving from a disgusting body with visible bones to a skinny body."

This...

Is this some sort of child abuse? Shiroe thought.

Also, he was doubting the truth behind her words.

Even though Nureha announced she would say the truth from now on, Shiroe remained skeptical. Because Ooshima was not here. Nureha somehow found out from Ooshima about his meeting with Shiroe and came here before him, this fact remained unchanged.

Even if this lady was speaking in such a demure tone, she was still the guild master of the one guild, Plant hwyaden, ruling Minami.

But Shiroe wouldn't believe her if she said these were all lies. If liars could only lie, they would be on the same level as honest people.

Liars might tell the truth sometimes.

"I learned how to groom myself, but I was still a pathetic woman you can see on the streets anywhere. My flat chest, skinny limbs, and plain face, only my eyes were unnecessarily big. The comment I heard most often was that I was a 'girl who brings misfortune'. Fufufu, probably not only my appearance, it can't be helped if some parts inside me... But even so, there were still those who had demands from me just because I was young and a middle-school girl. I won't give an excuse, that it was necessary for survival. As I was happy someone praised me and became arrogant."

A blunt sense of unhappiness washed over Shiroe because of the contents of her words.

Is this the truth?

If it was, he was unhappy such things happened near him.

Is this a lie?

If it was so, he was still not happy a woman said such things intentionally to him.

"Shiro-sama?"

When he snapped out of his thoughts, Nureha's eyes were so close it made him jump. Nureha looked into Shiroe's eyes and smiled dimly.

"See, wasn't that boring? In the end, this world is not reality. This body and the skills it possesses are all an illusion. In this world, reality has no value at all. Shiro-sama, I will be your lover if you are willing to come to my side. Don't you want to? I have this body now, the body everyone praised to be warm and pure. Are you unwilling to accept a girl like me?"

Shiroe tasted salt in his mouth before he realized he was biting his lips.

His temperature rose and his cheeks were burning hot.

Her white cleavage showed through her dark dress. Her alluring fingers that were moving gently. Her flighty expression. Her voice that seemed to melt away. The poisonous cake so fragrant you wanted to take a bite anyway.

"My unappealing body won't be able to please men, so I have practiced hard... I am good at lying. If Shiro-sama doesn't mind the lies, I will be able to convince you. That's right, until you are satisfied. Be it sunset or sunrise, I will be by your side till the end of the world."

"Why?"

"... Do I need a reason?"

"You need to convince me that this is the truth, or else there is no point!"

"I already told you to just accept these lies... Everything is made up anyway."

Her peach pink lips injected sweet honeyed words into Shiroe. Shiroe could see the pleading and playful mysterious smile of Nureha and her gently wagging tail.

"... It's all made up?"

"Yup, it's all made up, a work of fiction... It's the experience of my friend's sister... That lady came into contact with Elder Tales one day. This form of entertainment is far off from the world she lives in. But even so, she grew addicted to it. Do you know why?"

Shiroe didn't know.

He was unable to answer.

"Because she could get the ideal body in this game. That way she would be protected, wooed, given gifts, and receive the happiness she could only wish for. She obtained a beautiful face and alluring body in this world but... It is just a game, so isn't it laughable to act this way?"

Shiroe's tongue was stuck in his mouth, as Nureha continued.

"She... doesn't have luck with men. Even with her heavenly looks and figure, she still hasn't got what she wanted. Because this is an MMO, you will be treated kindly and warmly if you are a girl, but she still didn't get what she hoped for. The man she is after, the man she desires ignored her for unknown reasons. Why? Some girls look plainer than her but are more popular. They are loved by others just because they are cheerful and naive. There are such girls out there."

Nureha's eyes were like dark pits, devouring Shiroe.

"Don't look at the way I am now, I put in a lot of effort okay... I learned a graceful demeanour and words in order to please men, researched which actions will attract guys spending lots of time on my hair and clothes. It might sound ridiculous, but I even doll up for offline meetings. That was so shameful fufufu... But I failed anyway... No, don't look so sad, my effort wasn't in vain. Thanks to these skills, I can serve Shiro-sama properly... Sounds good right?"

This was a sweet, fragrant, pleasing to the ears and beautiful temptation... But the words were rotten. Shiroe was confused by these symptoms.

Even though Nureha's invitation was twisted in some ways, it still had a dazzling charm to it, magical enough to captivate Shiroe's soul.

"But she... one day, fell into the abyss of despair, then someone said this to her. 'You are strong'... 'Even though you play solo, you have my respect'... Another Enchanter told her this. How about it Shiro-sama? Is this work of fiction acceptable to you?"

"Is this..."

Is this true? Shiroe couldn't bring himself to say it. Shiroe didn't remember saying this, and couldn't conclude whether she was lying. Although he only recalled after meeting her again, Shiroe and Nureha partied together several times in the past.

With his fame he built up in the Tea Party, Shiroe fought in many major raids as a reinforcement from outside the guild. It should be the same with Nureha. Enchanters were not necessary in normal adventures, but in the long battles of major raids, their MP recovery abilities were very useful.

Shiroe was unable to say for certain he did not utter these words in the past.

Assuming he did say them, he probably didn't do so out of ill-will. It was not Shiroe's nature to do such things to get on the good side of women, and he was not skilled at this anyway. Because of this, he could have mentioned his true feelings without much thought.

Shiroe was unable to question her about the legitimacy of this.

He thought forgetting was a form of cruel betrayal.

"Shiro-sama, please come to my side. I will prepare a position for Shiro-sama in Plant hwyaden. I have already prepared the title of 'Royal Secretary' in the Itsuki family to be bestowed on Shiro-sama. The Itsuki clan listens to all my biddings anyway... Shiro-sama already has made some headway already right? Regarding this drastic change and a way back into our old world."

Her words made Shiroe gasp.

"Ah ah, a reaction... Shiro-sama is a special person indeed. I know too... I know a way back."

There was no way to tell just how much Nureha had seen through Shiroe as she licked her red lips after saying this. Shiroe averted his eyes from her tempting movements, making her laugh cheekily like a teenage girl.

"I discovered a way to return to our old world."

"It's still too early to prove it as a means to return... Since there is no evidence, it is just deleting the body from this world."

"If Shiro-sama is willing to help, we can avoid such uncertain results right."

To be honest, Shiroe almost agreed to join Nureha at this point.

Not because of the temptation from Nureha.

Shiroe was interested in the skills Nureha had gained. Staying in the west dominated by Nureha would open up more information channels than staying in Akiba. Be it gathering data or developing new techniques, it would be much easier to get the things he wanted using the influence of Nureha's colossal guild. Considering the goal of returning to the old world, this was the most efficient path. It could be described as the best path to take for the good of all Adventurers.

No, this theory was just an excuse.

The terms Nureha offered were too good.

This was not referring to Nureha's beauty and body. But the one who called Shiroe special made him awaken the loneliness in his heart that he had forgotten about. Shiroe was weak in declining the requests of others, which caused Shiroe to visit many guilds and get hurt in the process.

It was obvious that Nureha was wild and dangerous. But that was the reason why Shiroe almost gave in to her invitation. No matter how true her words were, could Shiroe be the only mind who could stop her? It was a dangerous sensation, a sweet temptation eating at Shiroe's heart.

Shiroe felt obligated.

Even though he was not the cause of this, the feeling of guilt churned like a torrent in his heart. It was an emotion that stemmed from his sense of responsibility, a feeling of guilt despite not being guilty. The worse thing was Nureha understood this point.

"... In the end, Shiro-sama is not being rational right?"

"Rational?"

Shiroe answered the feverish Nureha who only had Shiroe in her eyes.

"Yes, rational. Shiro-sama... is an irrational person right? You do not have any reason to side with Akiba, and no cause to side with the People of the Land correct? It's just a vague sense of ethics right? No, it doesn't matter, this has nothing to do with my desire to be with get Shiroe-sama, but I think Shiroe-sama will feel bad about this, so..."

Nureha moved her lips so close to Shiroe's ears that it was almost touching, a distance where you could feel each other's body warmth.

"Please Shiro-sama, use me, Nureha, as an excuse. Please use me as your reason... This way, Shiro-sama will be able to release your full potential right? You can get rid of limitations and boundaries, allowing you to use your intellect to the fullest correct? I only wish for Shiro-sama, so Shiro-sama can use Nureha as your reason, as an excuse, and do anything you want with me, okay?"

The decisive words of temptation marked the point they went their separate ways.

Being able to use his intellect to its limit was a very tempting deal for Shiroe. He woke up one day to find

himself in an alternate world, caught in the deteriorating security and conflicts, making him go through horrifying and dangerous crises. After going through this, Shiroe's desire to wield his power was as strong as his wish to kiss the beauty in front of him.

It was not Shiroe's fault they fell into this alternate world.

Wanting to blame the world was what all Adventurers invited into this world wanted to scream from their very soul. They wanted to know the reason for this and a purpose for them to fight for. It was the same for all Adventurers, their soul must be burning with anger at this unreasonable reality.

Nureha was correct.

And it was tempting because she was right.

But Shiroe was unable to use reasons as an excuse. This would definitely diminish the fruits of all their actions so far.

The touching fingertips, grateful smile, the banquet that lasted until dawn, the dessert that came from both ends, going on an adventure on the vast plains with everyone... all this would be diminished.

If he liked Nureha even a little bit, or felt an emotion that was close to love, Shiroe would never use her as an excuse.

Because he had Log Horizon now, Shiroe was able to assert this with conviction.

"Ah..."

Nureha looked at Shiroe who pushed her away, her fox ears squirming confusedly on top of her black hair.

"I have decided to treat all of your works of fiction as the truth... but I can't go with you."

Nureha was rooted to the ground, looking at Shiroe unwilling to give him up. She seemed to be pleading even after the rejection and asked with trembling lips: "Why?"

"Instead of being your companion, it is better to stay your enemy, your wish would more likely be fulfilled this way."

Shiroe looked at Nureha with his own will for the first time, speaking each sentence clearly as if to confirm his own conviction. His words stabbed Nureha's heart like a sword. Shiroe could feel her pain as he touched Nureha's cool face.

"I decided to continue being your enemy, so you can find a reason in the future."

Shiroe's words became the invisible chains that connected Nureha and Shiroe together.

This chain would guide Akiba and Minami to the 'Sky Labyrinth of Inburiumu' and onward to the 'Sea of

Nectar'.



CHIEF
NYANTA'S

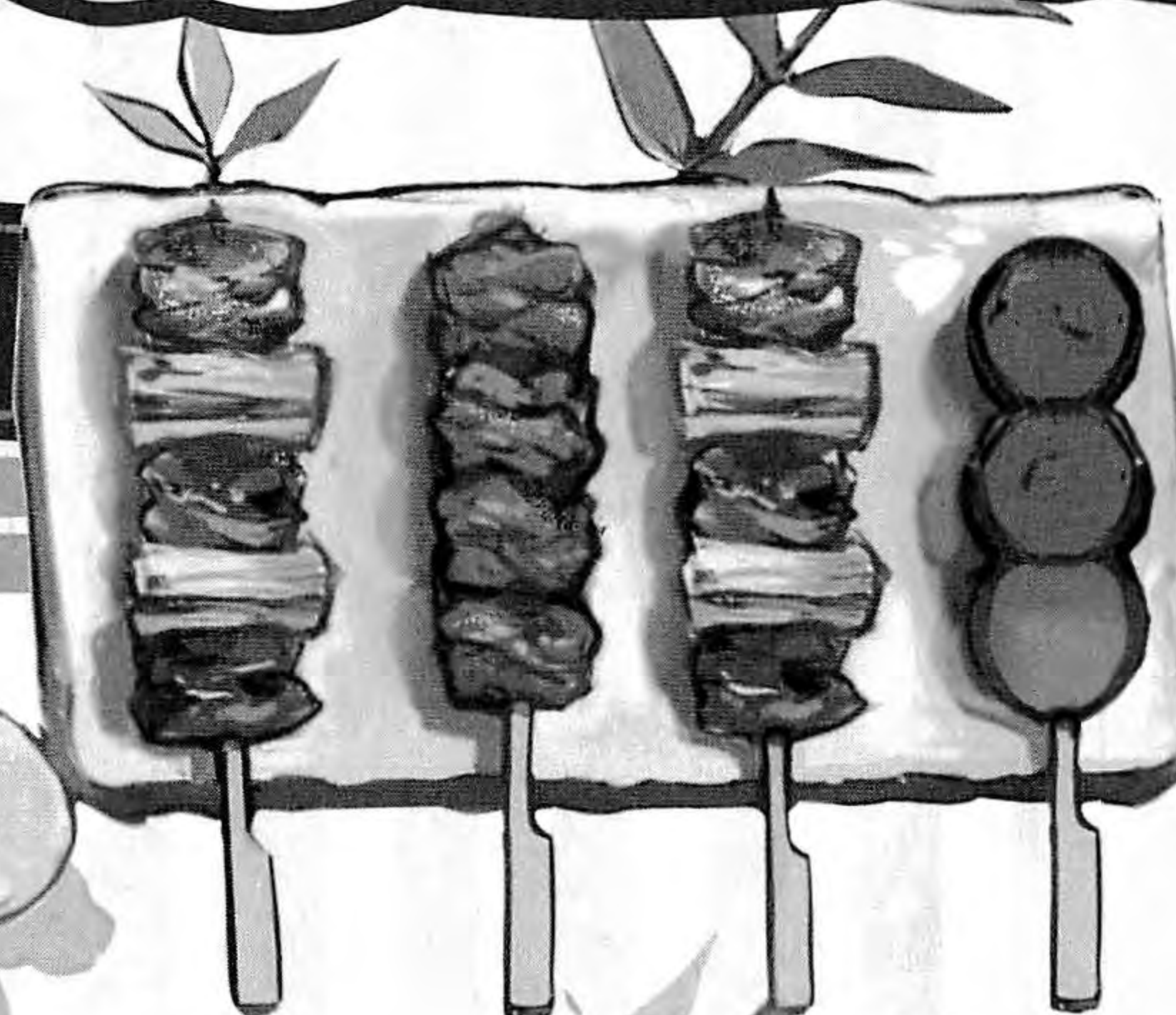
AKIBA FOOD GUIDE

[AN EYE FOR PICKING GOOD
INGREDIENTS]
LIZARD KEBAB

SOLD AT: TONSTON BBQ

WILD MEAT RATING: ★★ ★

THE BRAND NAME DISH PREPARED
WITH JUST SALT AND LIZARD MEAT.
,CRISPY ON THE OUTSIDE
JUICY ON THE INSIDE, IT
IS THE MOST PRIMITIVE
TYPE OF MEAT!



[WARM HEART AND BODY]
**FRENCH VEGGIE SOUP
WITH CABBAGE AND
SAUSAGE**

SOLD AT: HOUSE OF BIRCH

WARMTH RATING: ★★ ★

THE CHEWY SAUSAGE AND MEAT JUICE
THAT FLOWS INTO YOUR MOUTH WITH A
BITE. USING AMERICAN MUSTARD IS ALSO
A TRADITIONAL WAY OF EATING IT.

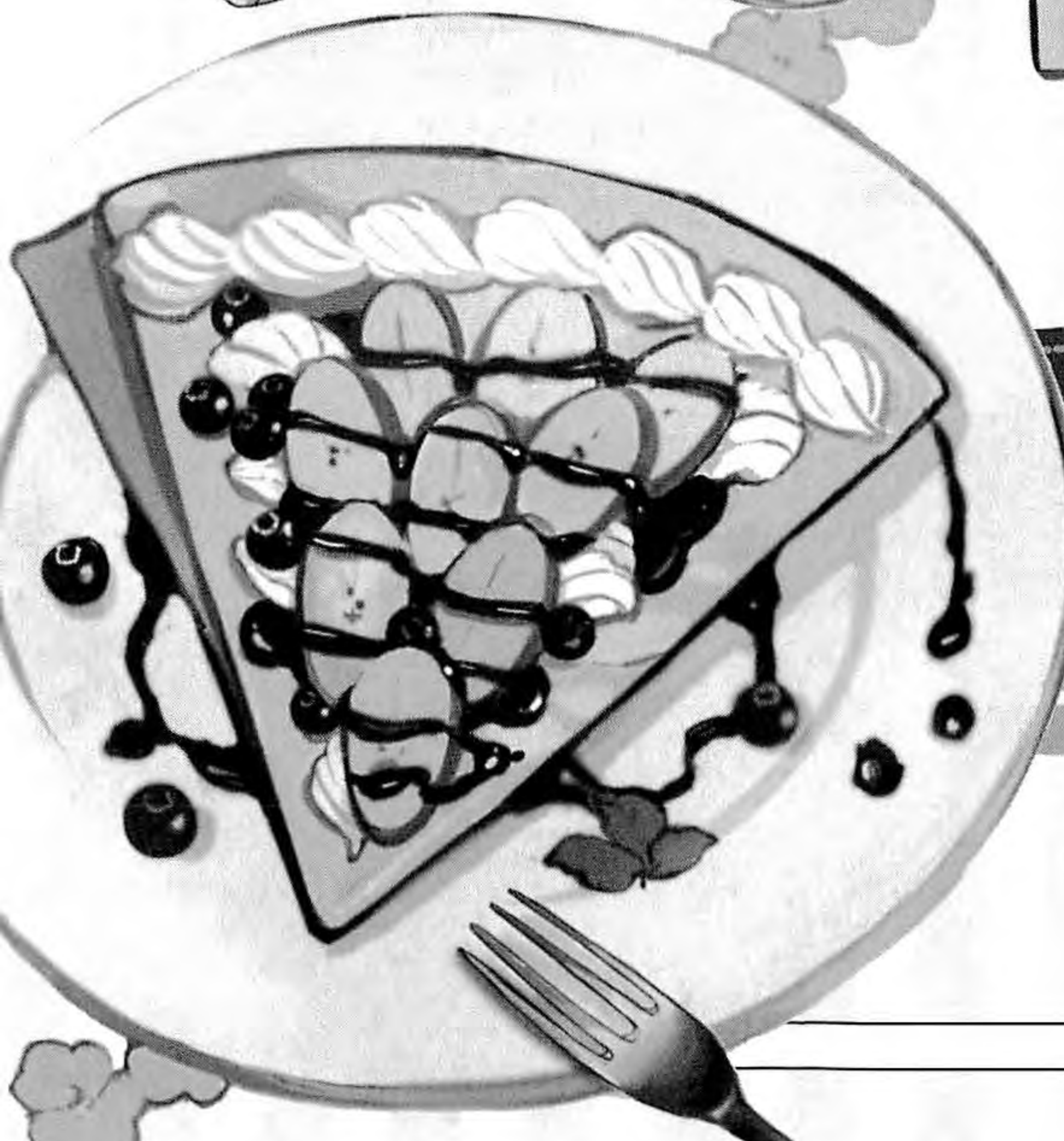


[DESSERT FOR THE SUMMER]
**ICE BERRIES AND
BANANAS ON
BUTTERED CREPES**

SOLD AT: WEST COAST DESSERT FACTORY

QUEUE RATING: ★★ ★

THE SWEET AND RIPE BANANA AND
THE MINTY ICE BERRIES, A SPECIAL
COMBINATION DESSERT ♥



[THE KING OF HAND MADE DISHES]
SPECIALTY RICE BALLS

SOLD AT: ATTACHMENT RICE BALL HOUSE

WARMTH RATING: ★★ ★★ ★

THE MOST POPULAR 3-TASTE COMBINATION
PROMOTED BY THE RICE BALL SPECIALTY
STALL. THE BENTOS MADE BY BEAUTIFUL
YOUNG GIRLS ARE SOLD OUT EARLY IN THE
MORNING.





[MEAT BUNS ARE MEANT TO EXPLODE!]
STEAM PORK BUN IN BAMBOO
CONTAINER

SOLD AT: GRAND EXPLOSION RESTAURANT

HEAT RATING: ★★★★★

THE TIGHT SKIN, THE CRISP BAMBOO CONTAINER
AND THE ALLURING JUICE THAT FLOWS SLOWLY.
EAT IT WHILE IT'S HOT!

[MADE TASTIER WITH THE SMILE OF THE LADY BOSS]
SAURY AND BACON WITH PLUM SAUCE

SOLD AT: INGREDIENT PAVILLION, HYDRANGEA

REFRESHING RATING: ★★★

DANLING SAURY WITH BACON COOKED WITH PLUM
SAUCE. THE REFRESHING TASTE OF THE PLUMS MELTS
INTO THE FATS OF THE SAURY, REMOVING THE OILY
SENSATION.



[THE HAPPINESS OF BURNT YELLOW]
FRESHLY MADE CROQUETTE

SOLD AT: TOPOTO BOSS'S COOKING HOUSE

SNACK RATING: ★★★★★

POTATO DEEP FRIED IN SUNFLOWER OIL HAS A
NOSTALGIC TASTE. THE UNIQUE SAUCE MADE WITH
A VARIETY OF VEGETABLE HAS A PERFECT
BALANCE BETWEEN SWEET AND SALTINESS.



[CLAW OF THE RUBY]
BAKED BUTTER CRAB SHELL

SOLD AT: SHIOSAI SEA HOUSE

GIANT CRAB RATING: ★★★★★

GIANT CRAB MEAT WITH MAYONAISE, VANILLA
GRASS, CARROTS AND ONIONS, A WONDERFUL
MADE AFTER BAKING IN THE OVEN.



[REVITALIZE!]
MATCHA STYLE RECOVERY YOUKAN

SOLD AT: 48 ROBIN TEAM

SNACK RATING: ★★

ADDING MATCHA STYLE MUTTON SOUP TO
POTIONS THAT INCREASE HP RECOVERY RATE,
RECREATING A OLD DESSERT. MYSTERIOUSLY
POPULAR!



YOKAN (羊羹) IS A THICK JELLIED DESSERT
MADE OF RED BEAN PASTE, AGAR, AND SUGAR
[HTTP://EN.WIKIPEDIA.ORG/WIKI/YOKAN](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yokan)

~LEGENDARY GOLDEN FRIED RICE~
FRIED RICE WITH THE EGG OF THE
THREE EYED BIRD

SOLD AT: FLAMING COOKING CLUB

GOLDEN RATING: ★★★★★

USING THE LUXURIOUS EGG OF THE THREE EYED
BIRD IN SHINSHUKU TO MAKE FRIED RICE, IT
ONLY HAS ROAST PORK MEAT AND CELERY.
SIMPLE IS BEST



A REGULAR DAY FOR
NYANTA

A REGULAR DAY FOR
TOHYA & MINORI

A REGULAR DAY FOR
NAOTSUGU

A REGULAR DAY FOR
AKATSUKI

A REGULAR DAY FOR
SHIROE

6:00

06:00 WAKE UP & GROOM FUR.
06:30 PREPARE EVERYONE'S BREAKFAST,
ALSO PREPARE LUNCHBOXES.
BREAKFAST IS A LITTLE SIMPLE NYA.

07:30 HAVE BREAKFAST WITH THE REST
OF THE GUILD.
08:00 HELP THE LOW LEVELS TRAIN.
SOMETIMES ACTS AS A PART TIME
INSTRUCTOR FOR 'CRESCENT ALLIANCE'

12:00

12:00 HAVE LUNCH OUTSIDE

13:00 MEET GUESTS AT THE GUILD HALL.
ALSO RECEIVE VARIOUS PARCELS
AND LETTERS NYA.

15:30 BUY INGREDIENTS FOR DINNER.
GO WITH SERARA SOMETIMES.

17:00 MAKE DINNER, AND ALSO PREPARE
FOR TOMORROW'S BREAKFAST.

18:00

19:00 EAT DINNER

20:00 REST IN THE LOBBY AFTER DINNER.
TASTE TESTING FOR HIS
NEWEST DESSERT.

21:00 CLEAN UP AFTERWARDS.
GROOM FUR.

22:00 BRING SHIROE SOME TEA
AND DISCUSS VARIOUS MATTERS
WITH HIM.

23:00 PROVIDE MAINTENANCE FOR ITEMS
AND MAKE PREPARATIONS
FOR TOMORROW'S ADVENTURE

24:00

24:00 SLEEP

3:00



06:30 WAKE UP TOHYA GOES TRAINING
SOMETIMES, MINORI HELPS
PREPARE BREAKFAST.

07:30 EAT BREAKFAST

08:00 HUNT MOBS IN THE FIELDS, THEY
DECIDE ON THE LOCATION THAT DAY

12:00 EAT LUNCHBOX

13:00 SWITCH TO A DIFFERENT LOCATION
AND CONTINUE GRINDING. COLLECT
FORAGABLE ITEMS IF THEY FIND ANY.

15:30 RETURN TO GUILD HALL. MINORI
HELPS SHIROE WITH ADMINISTRATIVE
WORK, TOHYA HELPS SHOP FOR
INGREDIENTS FOR DINNER.

18:30 BATH TIME. MINORI AND ISUZU BATH
TOGETHER, TOHYA AND RUDIE BATH
TOGETHER AFTERWARDS.

19:00 HELP DISTRIBUTE FOOD, EAT DINNER.

20:00 CHAT WITH EVERYONE IN THE LOBBY.
HAPPIEST TIME OF THE DAY.
PLAY GAMES WITH EVERYONE
OCCASIONALLY.

23:00 SLEEP



07:00 GET OUT OF BED AND DO SOME
STRETCHES TO WAKE HIMSELF UP

07:30 EAT BREAKFAST WITH GUILDIES

08:00 COMBAT TRAINING IN FIELDS.
OFTEN TRAINS TOGETHER WITH
MEMBERS FROM 'CRESCENT ALLIANCE'.

12:00 EAT LUNCH.

13:00 ACCEPT SHORT QUESTS LIKE
HUNTING MOBS OR ACTING AS AN
ESCORT IN THE GUILD HALL. EASILY
COMPLETED WITH HIS GRIFFON.

15:00 THAT WAS A LIE. IT'S NOT EASY
AT ALL. START PANICKING.

16:00 WANT TO GATHER SOME ITEMS AS
A SOUVENIR FOR 'CRESCENT ALLIANCE',
ACCIDENTALLY END UP PULLING A
GIANT MOB. RUN FOR HIS DEAR LIFE.

17:30 WON'T MAKE IT IN TIME FOR DINNER
IF THIS GOES ON, TIME TO GO ALL OUT

19:00 SOMEHOW MANAGE TO FINISH
IN TIME FOR DINNER

20:00 HAVE FUN WITH AKATSUKI
OR SHIROE

21:00 HAVE A PASSIONATE DISCUSSION
WITH RUDIE AND TOHYA ABOUT THE
TEN CUTEST STORE CLERKS IN
AKIBA. END UP GETTING SCOLDED
BY MINORI AND ISUZU.
GO TAKE A BATH.

22:00 VISIT SHIROE AND HELP A BIT WITH
THE ADMINISTRATIVE WORK

24:00 DO SOME SIMPLE STRETCHES
BEFORE SLEEPING.



6:00

05:30 WAKES UP BY HERSELF

06:00 JOGS AND GOES THROUGH HER PRACTICE
ROUTINE. TOHYA COMES ALONG RECENTLY,
ALTHOUGH HE SOMETIMES OVERSLEEPS.

07:00 TAKES A BATH AND WAKES UP HER LORD.
SITS THERE STANDING BY BEFORE THE
ALARM CLOCK RINGS.

07:30 EATS BREAKFAST WITH HER LORD.

08:00 COMBAT TRAINING IN THE FIELDS.
SUPERVISES TOHYA ET AL SOMETIMES.

12:00

12:00 EATS LUNCHBOX

13:00 GATHERS INFO IN AKIBA.
GUARD DUTY AROUND GUILD HALL

14:20 WASHES THE CLOTHES.
MUST PAY EXTRA ATTENTION
TO HER LORD'S CLOTHES!

15:00 OBSERVES HER LORD.
ASKS HIM OUT FOR TEA
IF SHE HAS THE CHANCE.

16:00 VISITS VARIOUS GUILDS, COLLECTING
DOCUMENTS AND LETTERS MEANT
FOR 'LOG HORIZON'

16:15 GETS CAPTURED BY HENRIETTA
16:35 SHOWS UP AT REYNESIA'S ROOM

18:00

18:00 TAKES A BATH

19:00 EATS DINNER.
MAKES SURE SHE SITS NEXT TO HER LORD.

20:00 REPORTS TO HER LORD THE RESULTS OF
THEIR TRAINING AND THE INFORMATION
SHE COLLECTED AROUND TOWN

21:00 PROVIDES MAINTENANCE FOR HER EQUIPS
AND ORGANIZES HER ITEMS
IN HER BEDROOM

22:00 SETS HER FLITON AND GOES TO BED

24:00

3:00



07:00 AWOKEN BY THE NEWLY MANUFACTURED
ALARM CLOCK

07:30 BREAKFAST. CONFIRM EVERYONE ELSE'S
SCHEDULES

08:00 DESK WORK IN HIS ROOM

10:00 MICHITAKA VISITS, DISCUSS THE VARIOUS
ISSUES THE RT NEEDS TO RESOLVE

11:00 CONTINUE DOING DESK WORK. THERE'S
EVEN MORE THAN BEFORE.

12:00 EAT LUNCH

13:00 GO TO THE RT'S HALL. DO ADMINISTRATIVE
WORK THERE.

15:00 RUN INTO AKATSUKI, HAVE SOME TEA
AND REST.

15:30 RETURN TO GUILD HALL AND DO
MORE DESK WORK

19:00 EAT DINNER

20:00 REST IN THE LOBBY AFTER DINNER.
DRINK TEA AND CHAT WITH THE OTHERS

21:00 GO BACK AND DO MORE DESK WORK

22:00 CHAT ABOUT STUPID THINGS
WITH NAOTSUGU AND NYANTA

23:00 TAKE A BATH AFTER THE GIRLS

01:00 GIVE UP PREPARING FOR TOMORROW'S
WORK. GO TO SLEEP



エルダー・テイル
での生活が
まる分かり

FORGALLR
MD
EAM
BES
TIME SCHEDULE

A REGULAR DAY FOR SOLJIROL

6:00

06:00 THE GUILD MEMBER ON DUTY WAKES HIM UP.

07:00 WASH FACE AND GET DRESSED.

07:30 BREAKFAST. THE SEATING ORDER IS MANAGED BY THE GUILD MEMBERS, SO HE CAN CONVERSE WITH DIFFERENT MEMBERS DAILY. THE ATMOSPHERE SEEMS TENSE?

08:30 GRINDING AND TRAINING. FORMS A PARTY WITH GUILD MEMBERS FOR TEAMWORK TRAINING. THE OTHER GUILDS GRINDING IN THE VICINITY RETREATS EARLY FOR UNKNOWN REASONS. INSTRUCT THE GUILD MEMBERS NOT TO BE A BOTHER TO OTHERS.

12:00

12:00 HAVE LUNCH BEARING THE FEELING OF A PICNIC. THERE IS A COMPETITION ONGOING AROUND HIM FOR UNKNOWN REASONS.

13:00 HELP THE ROUND TABLE COUNCIL WITH ADMINISTRATIVE WORK AT THE GUILD BUILDING. GUILD MEMBERS REQUEST HIM TO JUST SIT THERE QUIETLY.

15:00 PATROL THE CITY. THIS IS ALSO AN OBLIGATION OF THE ROUND TABLE COUNCIL MEMBERS.

18:00

18:00 DINNER. EXPRESS GRATITUDE TO THE MEMBERS WHO ALWAYS MAKES SUCH DELICIOUS DISHES.

19:00 THE BATH IN THE GUILD HOUSE ARE EXCLUSIVE TO THE FEMALE MEMBERS, SO HE DECLINES THEIR WARM INVITATION AND HEAD TO THE BATHHOUSE IN THE CITY. HE ALSO BORROWED THE SHOWERS AT LOG HORIZON BEFORE.

20:00 WRITE THE GUILD MASTER LOGS

20:45 SKILLS TRAINING IN HIS ROOM. UNDERSTANDING AN ULTIMATE TECHNIQUE IS A LONG AND TEDIOUS ROAD.

24:00

24:00 SHOWER AND SLEEP

3:00



A REGULAR DAY FOR MICHITAKA

06:00 GET UP FROM BED. EVEN IF HE WAKES COMFORTABLY, HE GETS DEPRESSED SEEING THE MOUNTAIN OF DOCUMENTS ON HIS DESK.

06:30 MORNING RUN

07:00 READ AKIBA NEWSPAPER, BROWSING THE LATEST NEWS. DO A LITTLE PAPERWORK.

08:00 BREAKFAST WITH CORE MEMBERS OF OCEANIC SYSTEMS. CONFIRMS EVERYONE'S SCHEDULE.

09:00 MEETING WITH THE RAW INGREDIENTS SUPPLIER FROM OUTSIDE THE GUILD. EXCHANGE INFORMATION ABOUT THE TRENDS OF THE GUILD AND THE SITUATION OF THE FIELD ZONES.

10:00 CONTINUE TO DO PAPERWORK. HALF OF IT IS DONE BEFORE LUNCH, THE SPEED IS GOOD.

12:00 LUNCH WITH CORE MEMBERS OF OTHER PRODUCTION GUILDS.

13:00 MEETING WITH ROUND TABLE MEMBERS AT THE GUILD BUILDING, WHICH MEANS PUSHING THE WORKLOAD AROUND.

14:00 DISCUSS NEW IDEAS WITH BLACKSMITH AND MECHANICS AT THE PRODUCTION STREET. THEORETICALLY POSSIBLE BUT SKILLS THAT IS BEST LEFT ALONE REALISTICALLY IS THE TOPIC OF THE DAY.

15:00 ATTEMPT TO MAKE NEW PARTS FOR OCYPETE AT THE WORKSHOP. SWINGS HIS HAMMER AT THE FORGE. HE CAN'T CALM DOWN WITHOUT DOING THIS EVERYDAY.

16:00 PART 1 OF DINNER. EAT RICE BALL OR SANDWICH WITH THE MEMBERS AT THE FORGE.

17:00 DISCUSS THE PRODUCTION OF PROPELLERS WITH MEMBERS PROFICIENT IN ENGINEERING.

18:00 STAYED TOO LONG IN THE WORKSHOP, ALMOST MISSED THE GUILD OPERATION MEETING.

19:00 PROGRESS REPORTS. PROPOSALS ABOUT WAREHOUSE MANAGEMENT AND STOCK INVENTORY ARE RAISED.

20:00 CONTINUE WITH PAPERWORK. THE SCALE OF THE GUILD IS GIGANTIC, JUST MANAGING RESOURCES IS A HEAVY WORKLOAD.

21:00 PART 2 OF DINNER. DISCOVERED A STALL TO HIS LIKING NEARBY, A GREAT FIND.

22:00 THE OTHER MEMBERS HELPS WITH PAPERWORK OUT OF SYMPATHY. WISH HE COULD BURN THEM ALL IN A FIRE.

23:30 DOESN'T UNDERSTAND WHY HE IS TAKING PART IN A TESTING SESSION OF THE NEW PRODUCT 'DISTILLED SPIRITS'. THE TASTE IS BAD, BUT IT FEELS GREAT TO DRINK WITH HIS BUDDIES.

01:30 GETS DIZZY AND SLEEPS RIGHT AWAY.



A REGULAR DAY FOR MARYELE

06:00 GET WOKEN UP BY HENRIETTA. RESIST.

07:30 GET OUT OF BED.

08:15 BREAKFAST AT THE GUILD'S CAFETERIA. MORE AND MORE PEOPLE KEEP COMING IN, MAKING THIS TIME MORE AND MORE FUN.

09:30 PRETEND TO TAKE CARE OF PAPERWORK WHILE ACTUALLY EXPLORING THE HALLS. EVERYONE ELSE IS HARD AT WORK.

12:00 LUNCHTIME IN THE COMPANY OF EVERY GUILD MEMBER WHO'S NOT OUTSIDE.

13:00 WALK AROUND. OCCASIONALLY CHECK BACK AT CRESCENT MOON.

15:00 CRESCENT MOON'S NEW FOOD PRODUCT SAMPLING ASSEMBLY, WHICH IS JUST AN EXCUSE TO EAT SOME MORE.

17:00 MEET UP WITH THE GATHERERS OUTSIDE. COLLECT TONS OF BERRIES.

19:30 CHEERFUL DINNER. ALL MEMBERS GATHER AND SHARE A LOT OF TODAY'S HAPPENINGS.

20:30 BATHING WITH FEMALE MEMBERS. FEELING GLAD THAT THE CRESCENT MOON HAS SUCH A BIG BATH.

21:30 WRITE A LOG WHILE JOKING AROUND WITH HENRIETTA.

22:00 GO TO SLEEP WHILE HUGGING THE PILLOW. TODAY WAS ALSO A FLOWERY DAY.

A REGULAR DAY FOR KRUSTY

6:00

06:00 GET OUT OF BED EARLIER THAN SCHEDULED. PERSONAL GROOMING TIME, FOLLOWED BY TEA.

06:30 WASTE TIME LOOKING THROUGH THE YESTERDAY-PREPARED INFORMATION REGARDING THE MERCHANTS AND NOBLES THAT ARE SCHEDULED FOR A MEETING TODAY.

07:00 BREAKFAST TIME, HEAD FOR THE GREAT DINING HALL. MANY GUILD LEADERS HAVE THEIR MEALS HERE.

08:00 GUILD CONFERENCE. THE EXCHANGES ARE AS LIGHTEARTED AS THEY WERE WHEN IT WAS A GAME, WHICH IS PLEASANT.

09:00 READ THROUGH DOCUMENTS OR TAKE PAPERWORK OUTSIDE. SIT UNDER A TREE'S SHADE AND CREATE INSTRUCTION MANUALS WHILE OBSERVING THE GUILD'S TRAINING GROUNDS.

11:00 MEET THE APPOINTED LANDER MERCHANTS AND NOBLES. IT ALL GOES SMOOTHLY AND ENDS VERY QUICKLY.

12:00

12:00 LUNCH. SOMETIMES AT RAYNESIA'S PLACE, USUALLY WITH OTHER GUILD LEADERS.

15:05 GO TO THE EMBASSY TO OBSERVE RAYNESIA.

16:30 GET INTO THE MIDDLE OF A LARGE SCALE SIMULATION TRAINING BATTLE. REVIEW THE COORDINATION.

18:00

18:00 TAKE A BATH.

19:00 DINNER ALONG WITH REPORTING AND INFO EXCHANGING. AFTER WHICH IT'S TIME TO GIVE ASSIGNMENTS TO THE MEMBERS.

20:00 ALONE TIME IN THE STUDY, COFFEE IN HAND. DISPASSIONATELY DO SIMPLE TASKS.

21:00 LEAVE FOR SOME PERSONAL TRAINING. USUALLY FOR SOME SHINJUKU IMPERIAL GARDEN UNDERGROUNDS OR ANOTHER HARD AREA.

24:00

01:30 RUN OUT OF CONSUMABLE ITEMS. END TRAINING.

02:00 TAKE A DIP IN WATER AND FINALLY GO TO SLEEP.

3:00



A REGULAR DAY FOR RAYNESIA

06:30 WAKE UP AND INSTANTLY GO BACK TO SLEEP

07:15 GET OUT OF BED. LET ELISSA DO THE DRESS UP

07:45 BREAKFAST. LET ELISSA TEACH HER TODAY'S SCHEDULE

10:00 CHECK PAPERWORK AND REPORTS. MASS PRODUCE THANK-YOU LETTERS

11:30 RUN OUT OF ENERGY

12:00 GET DISGUISED AND GO OUTSIDE. IT FEELS LIKE THE ADVENTURERS KNOW. BUY LUNCH. LEAVE IT TO ELISSA ON DAYS WHEN LEAVING IS NOT AN OPTION. EAT LUNCH.

13:00 STANDBY AT THE EMBASSY. INTERACT WITH VISITORS. GET TIRED OUT SINCE IT'S HEAVY ON THE HEAD.

14:30 MIND BEGINS TO DIM

15:00 ELISSA DOES A RE-DRESS UP FOR WHATEVER REASON

15:30 KRUSTY COMES A LOT. BRINGS SOME ANNOYING PACKAGES AND DOCUMENTS. LEAVES AFTER DRINKING TEA. NO WORK COMES WHEN HE'S AROUND SO IT'S CONVENIENT.

16:00 DONE WITH WORK. GO FOR A NAP IF ELISSA SLIPS UP IN HER OBSERVANCE (HAPPENS ABOUT ONCE A WEEK)

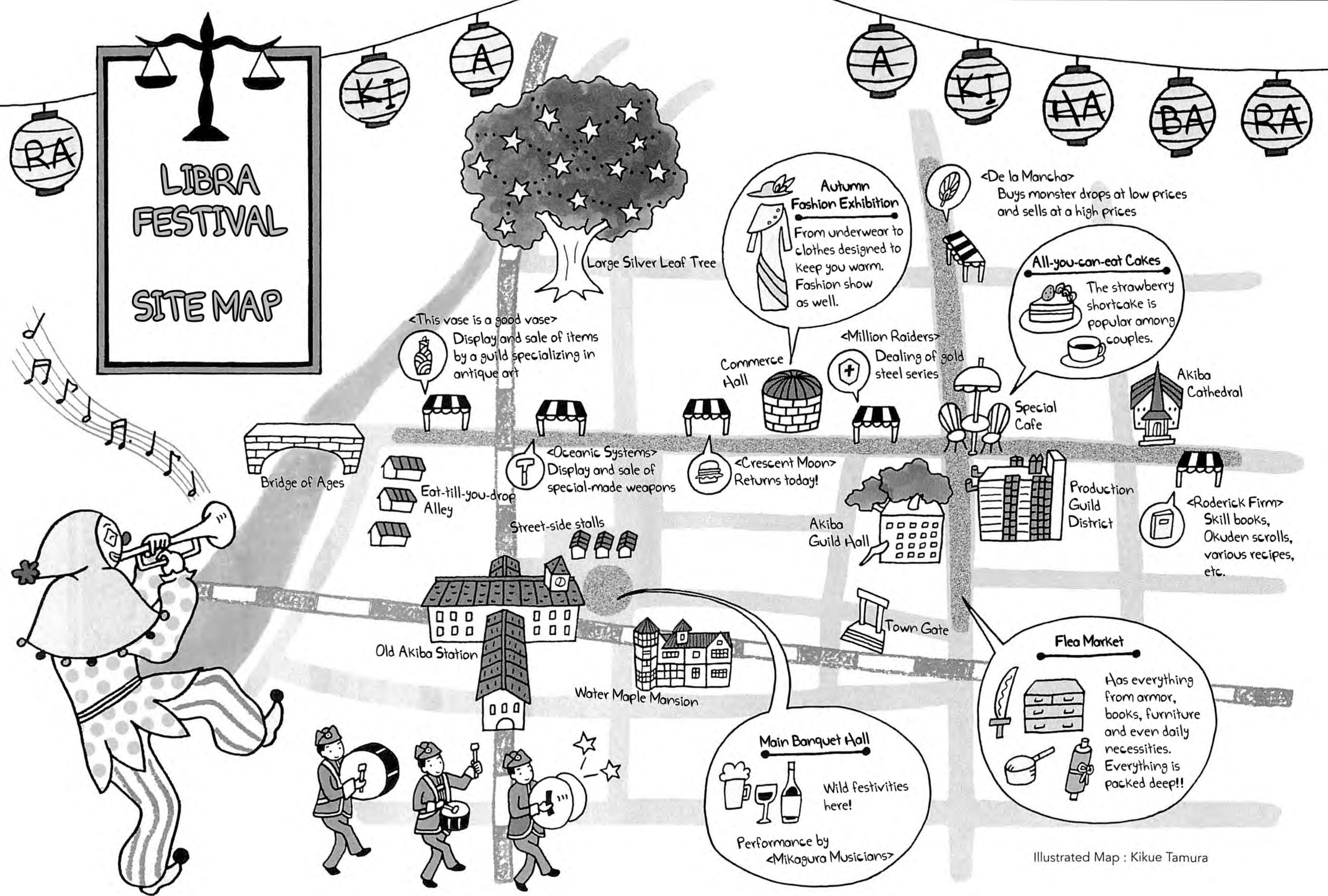
17:30 DINNER. DINNER PARTIES HAPPEN TWICE A WEEK, INTERACT WITH GUESTS IF THAT'S THE CASE.

19:00 BATH TIME. RELAXATION. GET MASSAGED, RUBBED WITH BALM, HAIR COMBED, ETC. AKIBA'S BATHS ARE PLEASANT.

21:00 ANOTHER DRESS-UP WITH ELISSA. THIS TIME WITH A LECTURE.

21:30 GO TO BED.





LOG HORIZON [TERMINOLOGY]

▶ 世界の歴史

USING A SWORD AND MAGIC WORLD AS ITS THEME, IT IS THE LARGEST ONLINE GAME IN THE WORLD. WITH ITS PROUD 30 YEARS HISTORY, IT IS AN MMOPE LOVED BY ITS HARDOORE PLAYERS.

▶ 事件の経緯

THE INCIDENT WHERE ELDER TALE PLAYERS ARE TRAPPED IN THE GAME WORLD. THE DAY THE 18TH EXPANSION PACK THE NOVASHERE PIONEER WENT LIVE, ALL 30,000 JAPANESE PLAYER WHO WERE ONLINE WAS TRAPPED.

▶ 基本用語

A TERM DESCRIBING ALL ELDER TALE PLAYERS. THE PLAYER'S OWN IDENTITY, YOU CAN SET YOUR HEIGHT, CLASS AND RACE AT THE BEGINNING OF THE GAME. IT IS MAINLY USED BY THE NPC WHEN ADDRESSING THE PLAYERS.

▶ 世界観と設定

SHIROE AND THE OTHERS ARE TRAPPED IN ELDER TALE THAT HAS TURNED INTO THE ALTERNATE WORLD.

▶ 公会

A GROUP FORMED BY MULTIPLE PLAYERS. MEMBERS CAN CONTACT EACH OTHER EASY TO GO ON ADVENTURES TOGETHER. IT IS EASY TO TRADE ITEMS TOO. MANY PLAYERS JOIN GUILDS TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF ITS CONVENIENCE.

▶ 公会の仕組み

THE GOVERNING BODY OF AKIBA FORMED UNDER SHIROE'S PROPOSAL. IT'S 11 MEMBERS INCLUDE THE GUILD MASTER OF BLUE BATTLE GUILDS, MAJOR PRODUCTION GUILDS AND THE REPRESENTATIVE OF ALL THE SMALL GUILDS, LEADING THE REVOLUTION IN AKIBA.

▶ 公会の歴史

GUILD STARTED BY SHIROE AFTER THE APOCALYPSE. PIONEER MEMBERS ARE AVALTUSKI, NAOTSUGU AND NYANTA. THE TWIN MINORI AND TOHYA JOIN SOON AFTER. IT'S BASE IS IN THE RUINAL POSE OF AKIBA. AN ABANDONED BUILDING THAT HAS A OLD GIANT TREE GROWING OUT OF IT.

▶ 公会の目的

LEAD BY MARYELE, IT'S A GUILD FORMED WITH THE PURPOSE OF SUPPORTING MID LEVEL PLAYERS. MARYELE'S GOOD FRIEND FROM HIGH SCHOOL, HENRIETTA ACTS AS ITS ACCOUNTANT.

▶ 世界の仕組み

THE WAY NPC CALLS THEMSELVES. THEIR NUMBER HAS GROWN A LOT AFTER THE APOCALYPSE. THEY NEED TO EAT AND SLEEP. IF YOU DO NOT USE YOUR STATUS MENU TO CONFIRM, IT IS HARD TO DIFFERENTIATE THEM FROM OTHER PLAYERS.

▶ 半ガリアプロジェクト

THE PROJECT ELDER TALE IMPLEMENTS WITH THE GOAL TO RECREATE THE WORLD WITH HALF ITS SCALE. ITS SHAPE AND GEOGRAPHY IS SIMILAR TO REAL EARTH, BUT THE DISTANCE HAS BEEN SHORTEN TO HALF, AND THE AREA IS ONLY A QUARTER.

▶ 古代の時代

THE SETTING BY THE DEVELOPERS OF THE ONLINE GAME ELDER TALE. A TERM FOR THE FALLEN CIVILIZATION IN THE PAST. IT IS BASED ON THE REAL WORLD CIVILIZATION AND TECHNOLOGY. THE ABANDONED METROS AND BUILDINGS ARE THE LEGACY OF ANCIENT TIMES.

▶ デバチエリパーティ

A GROUP THAT SHIROE, NAOTSUGU, NYANTA STAY IN FOR A PERIOD OF TIME. IT WAS ACTIVE FOR 2 YEARS, BUT DID NOT OPERATE AS A GUILD. BUT IT IS A LEGENDARY ORGANIZATION IN ELDER TALE, AND IS STILL FAMOUS NOW.

▶ 転送装置

TRANSPORT DEVICE LOCATED IN THE PLAINS. THE TRANSPORT LOCATION IS AFFECTED BY THE LUNAR CYCLE. IF YOU USE IT AT THE WRONG TIME, THERE IS NO WAY OF KNOWING WHERE YOU WOULD GO. WITH SLEEPING THE INTERNET FOR GUIDES OUT OF THE QUESTION AFTER THE APOCALYPSE, ALMOST NO ONE CAN USE THEM.

▶ ノイズ

A UNIT TO DESCRIBE SQUARE AREA IN ELDER TALE. IT MIGHT BE A PIECE OF PLAIN, A DUNGEON, A CITY AND ALSO A SMALL AREA LIKE A ROOM IN THE HOTEL. CAN BE PURCHASE ACCORDING TO THE DISPLAYED PRICE.

▶ 世界の仕組み

THE WORLD NAME IN A GAME MADE BY "HALF GARA PROJECT." EQUIVALENT TO "THE EARTH" IN THE REALITY WORLD.

▶ スキル

A VARIETY OF ABILITY USABLE BY ADVENTURERS. CAN BE LEARN BY LEVELING UP MAIN CLASS OR SUBCLASS. ALL SKILLS CAN BE DIVIDED TO NOVICE, INTERMEDIATE, ULTIMATE AND SECRET. THESE 4 LEVELS, CAN BE LEVELED BY TRAINING THE SKILLS.

▼ MAIN CLASSES

IT DECIDES THE PLAYERS BATTLE ABILITY IN ELDER TALE. WHEN A PLAYER START THE GAME, THEY CAN CHOOSE FROM 12 UNIQUE CLASSES, CATEGORIZED INTO WARRIOR CLASS, WEAPON-BASED CLASS, HEALER CLASS AND MAGE CLASS. THERE ARE 3 CLASS FROM EACH CATEGORY, A TOTAL OF 12.

▼ 5700 CLASS

HAVE NO DIRECT RELATION TO BATTUNG, BUT A CONVENIENT SKILL TO HAVE WHILE PLAYING THE GAME. COMPARED TO THE 12 CLASS, THERE ARE OVER 50 SUBCLASSES, FROM CONVENIENT JOBS TO JOKE SUBCLASS, IT HAS A WIDE VARIETY MIXED IN.

▼ AKIBA CITY

ONE OF THE PLAYER CITIES IN YAMATO, IT'S POSITION IS RELATIVE TO REAL JAPAN'S AKIBA.

▼ CRESCENT ARCHPELAGO YAMATO

THE WORLD OF SERPESSEA IS BASE ON THE REAL WORLD. CRESCENT ARCHPELAGO YAMATO IS EQUIVALENT TO THE REGION OF JAPAN, DIVIDED INTO EZZO EMPIRE, FOURLAND DUKEDOM, NINETAIL DOMINION, LEAGUE OF FREEDOM CITIES EASTAL AND HOLY EMPIRE WESTELANDE THESE 5 AREAS.

▼ CAST TIME

THE TIME NEEDED TO PREPARE BEFORE ACTIVATING A SKILL. IT DIFFERS FROM SKILL TO SKILL, POWERFUL SKILL USUALLY HAVE LONGER CAST TIME. YOU CAN MANUEVER WHILE CASTING COMBAT SKILLS, BUT ANY MAGIC SPELLS WILL BE INTERRUPTED IF YOU MOVE WHILE CASTING.

▼ MOVING RING

THE EFFECT OF UNABLE TO MOVE YOUR BODY TEMPORARY AFTER USING A SKILL. UNABLE TO MOVE OR ACT UNTIL SKILL STIFFNESS WEARS OFF.

▼ RESPAWN TIME

AFTER USING A SKILL, THE TIME NEEDED TO USE IT AGAIN. THIS RESTRICTION PREVENTS PLAYER FROM SPAMMING A SPECIFIC SKILL. SOME SKILL HAS THE RESTRICTION OF USING IT ONCE PER DAY.

▼ COOL DOWN HOUR

ONE OF THE BASIC SKILL ALL ADVENTURERS CAN LEARN. CAN INSTANTLY TELEPORT TO THE LAST VISITED SAFE ZONE WITH A CATHEDRAL. HAVE A COOL DOWN OF 24 HOURS.

▼ RAID

REQUIRES MORE ADVENTURERS THAN THE STANDARD PARTY OF 6 TO BATTLE, ALSO USED TO DESCRIBE A LARGE GROUP OF PLAYERS. MOST WELL KNOWN ARE THE 24 PLAYERS 'FULL RAID' AND THE 96 PLAYERS 'LEGION RAID'.

▼ RACE

THE WORLD OF SERPESSEA HAS ALL KIND OF HUMANOID RACES. ADVENTURERS CAN CHOOSE HUMAN, ELF, DWARF, HALF-ALV, WERECAT, WOLF FANG, FOXTAIL AND RACE OF CEREMONY THESE 8 RACES, KNOWN AS THE 'KIND HUMAN RACES'.

▼ MAIN CLASSES

MAGIC ATTACK CLASSES



SORCERER

STRONG AT DEALING DIRECT DAMAGE TO OPPONENTS.



SUMMONER

STRONG AT SUMMONING AND MANIPULATING MYTHICAL BEASTS AND SPIRITS.



ENCHANTER

STRONG AT THE CONTROL OF BATTLE STATUS AND MP.

HEALING CLASSES



CLERIC

THE ULTIMATE HEALER BOASTING OF THE GREATEST HEALING ABILITY.



DRUID

A MAGIC-TYPE HEALING CLASS THAT ALLIES WITH THE NATURAL AND SPIRITS



KANNAGI

A PREVENTIVE-TYPE HEALING CLASS THAT BLOCKS OFF DAMAGE.

WEAPON ATTACK CLASSES



ASSASSIN

A PURE ATTACKER PROFICIENT IN THE USE OF DIVERSE WEAPONS.



SWASHBUCKLER

TAKES UP A GUERRILLA-LIKE POSITION. DUEL-WIELDING AND VERSATILE



BARD

A LIGHT-ARMORED WARRIOR FLUENT IN MANY "SONGS" OF MAGICAL EFFECTS.

WARRIOR CLASSES



GUARDIAN

WIELDS THE HIGHEST DEFENSIVE ABILITY AND ABILITIES THAT GATHERS ENEMIES BY AGGRO.



SAMURAI

USES JAPANESE-STYLED EQUIPMENT, AND WIELDS POWERFUL SKILLS.



MONK

A BALANCE CLASS THAT LACKS ARMAMENTS BUT EXCELS IN EVASION.

Afterword

Greetings, it's been 2 months, I am Mamare.

I am grateful for your purchase of Log Horizon 5 Sunday in the streets of Akiba, which is the last Log Horizon book for the year. Ah~ this has been a long year. Although I want to say 'this is a good place to stop!' but it is already the spring of 2012 in the publishing world.

If my esteemed readers are in the workforce, you should be able to understand the production process and the merchandise making it to the shelf are different things. You might be in December while holding this book, but Mamare is still stuck in October country.

The weather is getting cold, the sunlight is gradually making people happy and the bed is becoming alluring. That's right, this is the season for afternoon naps. Some people call it the autumn of appetites, the autumn for sports, but it is the autumn for sleeping for Mamare. Even the autumn of reading which is crucial for authors cannot beat afternoon naps.

The Mamare who was found out to be an author by his family starts to live his NEET lifestyle with an open heart at home. Although he has always lived like a NEET, but being a published author makes Mamare a professional NEET. Professional NEET (National class 1 limit break) just ranks below office dwelling NEET (international class 1) and married NEET (international class 2).

NEET lives carefree lives everyday like the Muni family <TL: finland fairy tale>. In fact, Mamare thinks it is a happy lifestyle where he can write daily, but he receive pressure from all sides. to use this chance and clean up the house. Asking a NEET to do hard labor, this goes against the international NEET charter. Mamare was being politically correct when saying 'all sides', the true meaning is 'threat of violence from Mamare(younger sister). Cough cough.

Electric stove, throw. Microwave, throw. Fridge, throw.

Cleaning the house this way feels more like moving than doing spring cleaning. Instead of moving, it is more like escaping in the night, pawning everything in the house away. If being bald is a refreshing feeling, then the Mamare house is super refreshing. Mamare don't understand how it turn out like this.

The fridge is gone, Mamare(younger sister) stock of ice cream is also finished. It is going to be winter soon and there is no need to stock up on ice cream, but Mamare(younger sister) is still furious. Mamare(younger sister) before entering middle school always thought that 'Hagen Daaz is only for grown ups, so I will only eat it after getting my licence'. Nope, that's how my mother educated her.

In the Mamare family, Lady Borden ice cream is used as a substitute for people who fail the age test. Lady Borden sama, I am sorry.

Speaking of comparison, the Mamare family treats Young anchovy rice bowl as the inferior substitute of Salmon roe rice bowl. Mother will talk about how 'eating such a small fish is a sin', making the

atmosphere during meals awkward. Mamare(younger sister) somehow mistook young anchovy to be baby Capelins somehow.

Recollecting this makes me realize mother was pushing it too much.

The reason why Mamare don't eat Natto is because mother said 'Chiba has a pond that ferments the beans, many people were forced into hard labor there'. Hai, what a terrible tale. When I ask her about it 10 years later, mother said with a smile 'that was a prank, because you were very arrogant back then'.

I was thinking about how to get back at her, but now I think about it, Mamare also pass on many fake knowledge to Mamare(younger sister), so I am guilty too. This is the ties of the blood.

A few days ago, I told her 'To confirm the final process of the publishing, I will be going to the factory to adjust the colors, this is an important obligation of the author' and prepare to leave the house. Mamare(younger sister) told me 'don't trouble others' and bid me farewell, she didn't think I am actually going to a BBQ party. But she found out in the end and gave me a punch.

Because of these matters, I want to let my editor F-ta chan play the female lead in my afterword too. If I keep going this route, the social pressure I feel from Mamare(younger sister) will increase, which manifest in the form of physical blows in reality. This ends the regular report of the Mamare family, I will talk about Log Horizon 5.

After taking a breather from the grand scale battles of the previous volume, this is a slice of life in Akiba episode this time. Shiroe's love story is gradually beginning, the 2 girls Akatsuki and Minori make their first moves.

Just like Lady Borden can't become the substitute of Hagan Daaz, similar to how young anchovy rice bowl is the inferior replacement of salmon roe rice bowl, the 2 of them are totally different entities. Unable to see this obvious concept, comparing things other than themselves, these unresolved feelings are the focus in this book. But without this suffering and darkness, they won't be able to welcome the daybreak.

The equipment of each character featured at the beginning of each chapter, is also the results of fan submission during September-October of 2011. The ideas we used are from 545454248、IGM_masamune、YoshiSondermann、hige_mg、hpsuke、iron007dd22、kane_yon、kuroyag16、roki-a、sawame_ja、shinbachi、shisei_ssi、vaiso y. maneeeeee、zrk-thank you everyone! Even though a lot of the submission did not make it to publication, I am still grateful to all netizens who participated, Log Horizon can only written with all your support.

Those who like this work after reading Log Horizon, please come and visit <http://mamare.net>! It provides the latest news and contents other than Log Horizon. Sales of Maou side story with drama CD is ongoing now, those who wants to find out about the manga please come and visit!

As we move to a close, I am grateful to chief publisher Mr Shoji Masuda, the illustration master Harakazuro sensei (I'm sorry for taking too long to edit my work), Hashimoto Mochichi sensei who drew the map for the base, Tamuraki Hisae sensei for illustrating the Libra Festival map, 24 sensei for drawing the food guide, tsubakiya firm for the publishing designs and my female editor the petite F-ta chan! Mr Osako also took care of me this round! Thank you everyone!

Next will be for the readers to enjoy this book, please take your time!

'Don't Ostracise Nameko bowl' Mamare Touno

A gear inside Akatsuki falls into place.

Lowering her centre of gravity and holding her breath. The image she draws from her heart when assuming this pose becomes a trigger for a skill. This is the unique skill of trackers, silent move. It usually requires the use of the game menu to activate it, but Akatsuki has trained it enough to call forth the technique with her body movements alone.

Her presence dissipates from her body clad in black, as if her life force itself is gone. The 'presence' of Akatsuki right now is very vague.

Akatsuki doesn't know her location, but she can see the attack from the demon blade clearly from her fixed field of vision. Akatsuki is exposed in the dangerous front of the attack, but there is another Akatsuki watching from another position. Her 'movement' is at the level of 'shadow burrowing', her separated life force advance in a straight line on the battlefield.

Akatsuki dodges past the ice storm like attack of the mass murderer.

The body that looks like Akatsuki and Akatsuki's consciousness are in different places.

The evidence is the shining body of Akatsuki and swaying in the ice storm, negating all attacks like illusions.

Akatsuki reaches the back of the mass murderer enduring the overwhelming sense of acceleration.

She can't keep this up much longer.

She can only activate this special skill by holding her breath and calming her heart. The skill used for infiltration mission or escaping from monsters are forcibly applied on the battlefield. This is the overskill Akatsuki learned.

...Boring.

Akatsuki wields her blade like a sparrow.

The sudden attack behind cuts into the throat of the mass murderer slightly. Even attacking with the illusion just now, he still manage to evade a fatal hit, the demon blade is formidable indeed.

...Boring.

Akatsuki did not feel the joy of achieving her wish. She stopped her breath and activate 'shadow burrow' again. The shadow copies that appears immediately confuse the mass murderer and help Akatsuki evade the triple strike and leap backwards.

Large icicles form with the strike, Akatsuki ignores the flying ice attack and continue to accelerate, dancing on the blade of the mass murderer.

8th November 2011

I have written till this point!

Mamare Touno

<TL: anyone can confirm the English name of Akatsuki's moves?>

Translator's Notes and References

1. ↑ Its unnecessary to clean Adventurers clothes, their appearance will change according to their durability. see -> [Log Horizon: Volume 4 Chapter 3#Part 3](#)
2. ↑ 20 tatami ~ 31 m² ~ 333.4 ft²
3. ↑ 10 tatami ~ 15.5 m² ~ 166.7 ft²
4. ↑ Law stating that as income rises, proportion spent on food decreases even if actual amount increases.
5. ↑ Sitting properly = 正座/seiza
6. ↑ TL: This is a common dressing for graduation ceremony, especially for grade-and middle-school.
7. ↑ This was translated as high school student
8. ↑ Special police force refers to the Shinsengumi
9. ↑ An endangered subspecies of leopard cat, of about the same size as a domestic cat, endemic to the island of Iriomote (西表島), the largest island of the Yaeyama islands and the second largest on Okinawa prefecture.
10. ↑ <TL: <http://www9.nhk.or.jp/anime/loghorizon/story/images/map.jpg>>

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